JULIAN COPE

THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN

A PRE-MILLENNIAL ODYSSEY
THROUGH MEGALITHIC BRITAIN
Including a Gazetteer to over 300 Prehistoric Sites

c. 5,000 years ago
Megalithic
Avebury

c. 4,000 years ago
Stonehenge
Trilithons Erected

c. 3,000 years ago
Helen of Troy
& the Trojan War

c. 2,000 years ago
Birth of Christ
Romans
Conquer Britain

c. 1,000 years ago
Norman Conquest
of 1066

The
Present Day

THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN is an eight-year odyssey in search of prehistoric Britain. Of the countless sites visited, over 300 of the very best have been selected, their remains photographed and their relationship to the landscape explained.

THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN takes the traveller to the first temples built on these islands, in order to shine a light into the shadowy past of a modern people who have been hoodwinked into believing their history began with the Roman conquest.

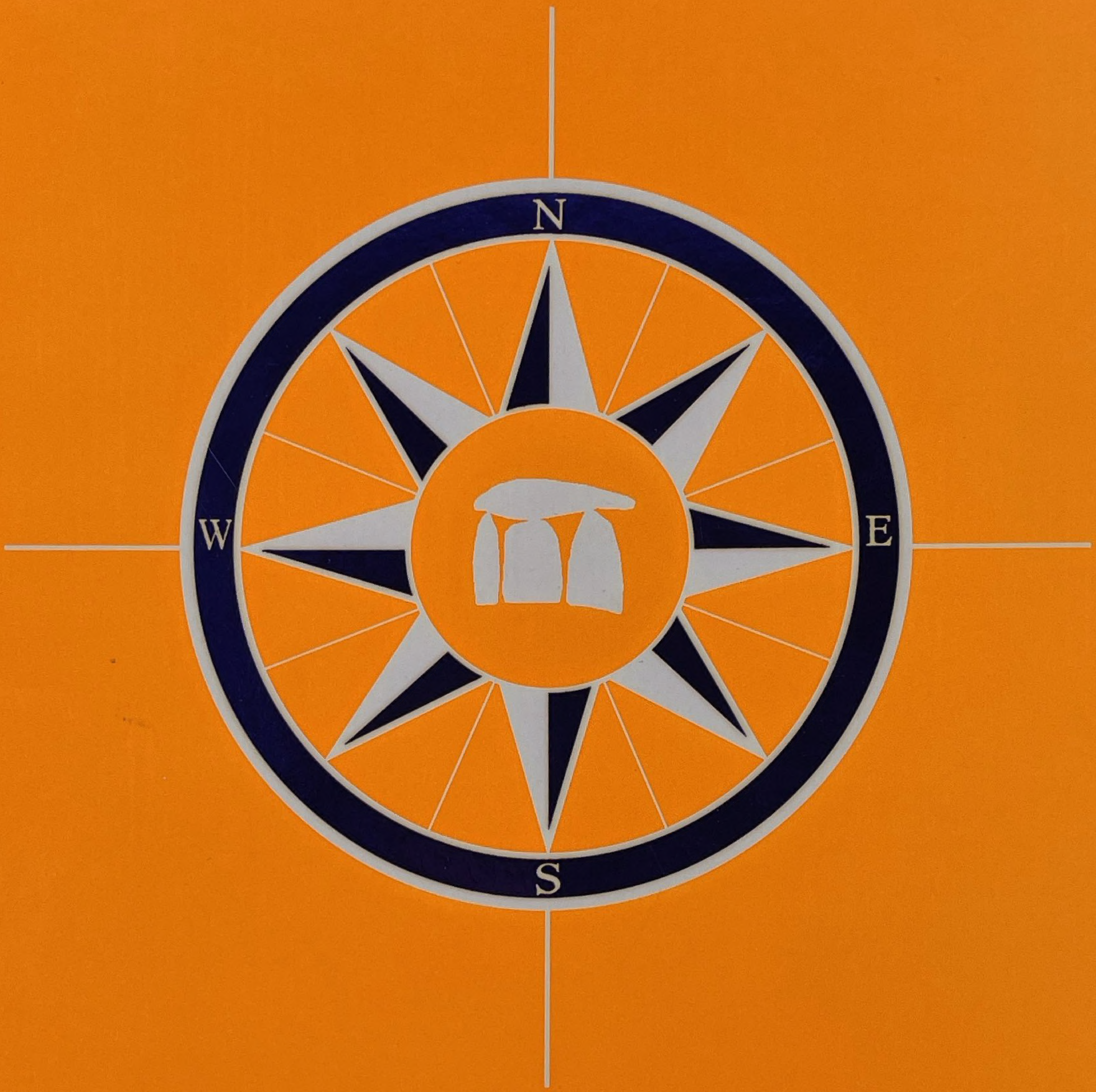
Although essentially a travel book, the essay section of THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN examines our prehistoric beginnings through the evidence of our megalithic remains and their surroundings, in order to help us reconcile where we are Right Now.

Britain Divided into 7 Rainbow Colours

Over 50 Poems

600 Photographs and Illustrations

Each Site Visited and Verified by the Author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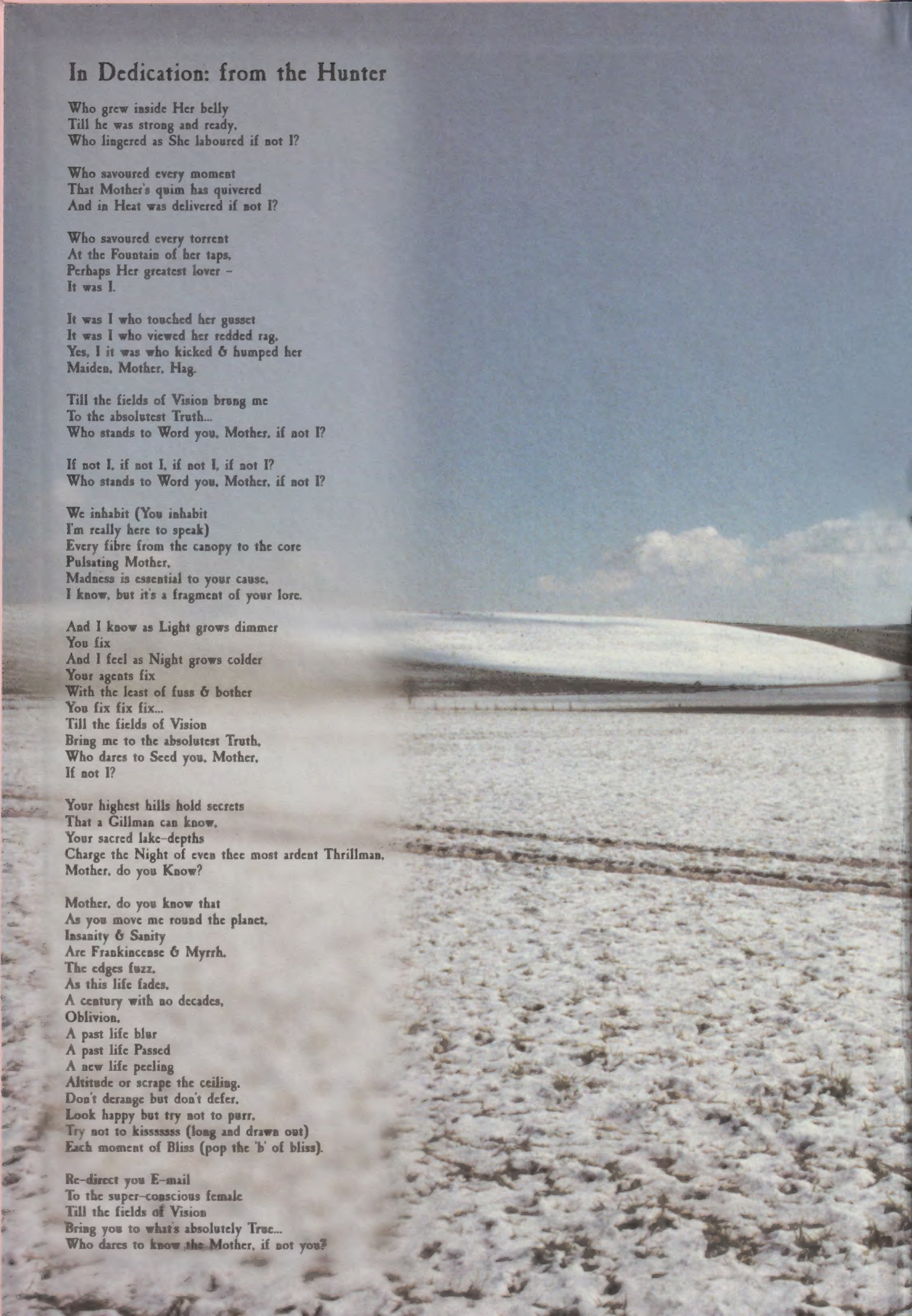
'Artists are gnostics,
and practise what
the priests think
is long forgotten.'

HUGO BALL, 1917



In Dedication: from the Hunter

Who grew inside Her belly
Till he was strong and ready,
Who lingered as She laboured if not I?

Who savoured every moment
That Mother's quim has quivered
And in Heat was delivered if not I?

Who savoured every torrent
At the Fountain of her taps,
Perhaps Her greatest lover –
It was I.

It was I who touched her gusset
It was I who viewed her redded rag,
Yes, I it was who kicked & humped her
Maiden, Mother, Hag.

Till the fields of Vision brung me
To the absolutest Truth...
Who stands to Word you, Mother, if not I?

If not I, if not I, if not I, if not I?
Who stands to Word you, Mother, if not I?

We inhabit (You inhabit
I'm really here to speak)
Every fibre from the canopy to the core
Pulsating Mother,
Madness is essential to your cause,
I know, but it's a fragment of your lore.

And I know as Light grows dimmer
You fix
And I feel as Night grows colder
Your agents fix
With the least of fuss & bother
You fix fix fix...
Till the fields of Vision
Bring me to the absolutest Truth,
Who dares to Seed you, Mother,
If not I?

Your highest hills hold secrets
That a Gillman can know,
Your sacred lake-depths
Charge the Night of even thee most ardent Thrillman,
Mother, do you Know?

Mother, do you know that
As you move me round the planet,
Insanity & Sanity
Are Frankincense & Myrrh.
The edges fuzz,
As this life fades,
A century with no decades,
Oblivion,
A past life blur
A past life Passed
A new life peeling
Altitude or scrape the ceiling.
Don't derange but don't defer,
Look happy but try not to purr,
Try not to kisssssss (long and drawn out)
Each moment of Bliss (pop the 'b' of bliss).

Re-direct you E-mail
To the super-conscious female
Till the fields of Vision
Bring you to what's absolutely True...
Who dares to know the Mother, if not you?

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THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN

A PRE-MILLENNIAL ODYSSEY THROUGH MEGALITHIC BRITAIN

including a Gazetteer to over 300 Prehistoric Sites

Thorsons
An Imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*

FOR DORIAN

Never was a man so blessed

AND FOR ALBANY AND AVALON

for their thousands of miles of patience

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Introduction

I grew up believing that British history began with the Romans and that anything before didn't really count. The Flintstones and the Stone Age Raquel-Welch-on-a-pterodactyl movies conspired to create a vast and seemingly impenetrable prehistoric 'Then'. All of that changed the first time I saw Avebury and my quest became clear: to discover all that had been withheld from me.

But as I tried to unravel the truth behind prehistoric Britain, it soon became obvious that, of the many books available, none attempted to pull it all together in a cohesive way that took in the entire big picture. There were guidebooks on how to get to the apparently hundreds of megalithic sites but, frustratingly, they would inevitably only list the 'show' sites, or include Iron Age or even Roman sites in one big lump. There were several 'coffee table' books containing beautiful pictures, but they would often not even bother to share the names of the sites with the reader, whilst impressive scholarly works by archaeologists, mystics and antiquaries were often too rare or too valuable for use in the field. I quickly became fed up with the need to travel with 20 or more books every time I set off to explore a new area and the dream of writing *The Modern Antiquarian* began. I wanted to bring it all together: pictures, maps, illustrations and practicality in a Gazetteer, along with an overview of the big picture in an Essays section.

Over the course of the eight years it has taken me to research and write this book, that big picture has continued to unfold and the story behind our prehistoric past has become ever clearer. It is a magical story, yet one which has been covered up, denied or ignored. Before the Romans foisted their Straight Lines upon us, these isles undulated with all that was the wonder of our Mother Earth. It appeared necessary therefore to thoroughly reacquaint the British with their most ancient sacred sites at this auspicious juncture in modern linear time. For it is here in the landscape that we can examine our most recent ancient beginnings in order to reconcile where we are Right Now.

At this millennium's turn, more and more people are moving away from the inherent meaninglessness of City Dweller living. But the death of meaninglessness will only truly be born when we free ourselves from the choking stranglehold that 2,000 years of patriarchal Mr Stork rules have brought us to.

This book aims to give something back to the culturally dispossessed of Britain, be they white, black or green; Welsh, English or In-between.

So here 'tis.

JULIAN
'Sool', The Marlborough Downs
Summer 1998 CE

NOTE: The G symbol directs the reader's attention to a site in the Gazetteer.

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JO RIDGEWAY

Thorsons Commissioning Editor

MICHELLE PILLEY

Editors
LIZZIE HUTCHINS
DORIAN COPE

Executive Editor under fire
PAUL REDHEAD

Jacket design by
AMANDA McKELVIE

S.E.C. Library indexed by
HELEN BESLITY

Cyber maps by
LISA BENNETT

Fine art & several reconstructions by
KENTUCKY JIM BENNETT

Production Controller
DAVID HEARN

Picture research by
ANNA GRAPES & LOUISE McNAMARA

Bartholomew's maps by
GAVIN JAMES

All artwork and photographs scanned by
ALAN STEADMAN, ROBIN BATESON & NEIL WHITE

Co-ordination at Create by
VIC ATKINS & DAVID BOLTON

Highlands & Islands organisation by
MICK GRIFFITHS & ROB ELLEN

Gaffer
SEBASTIAN SHELTON

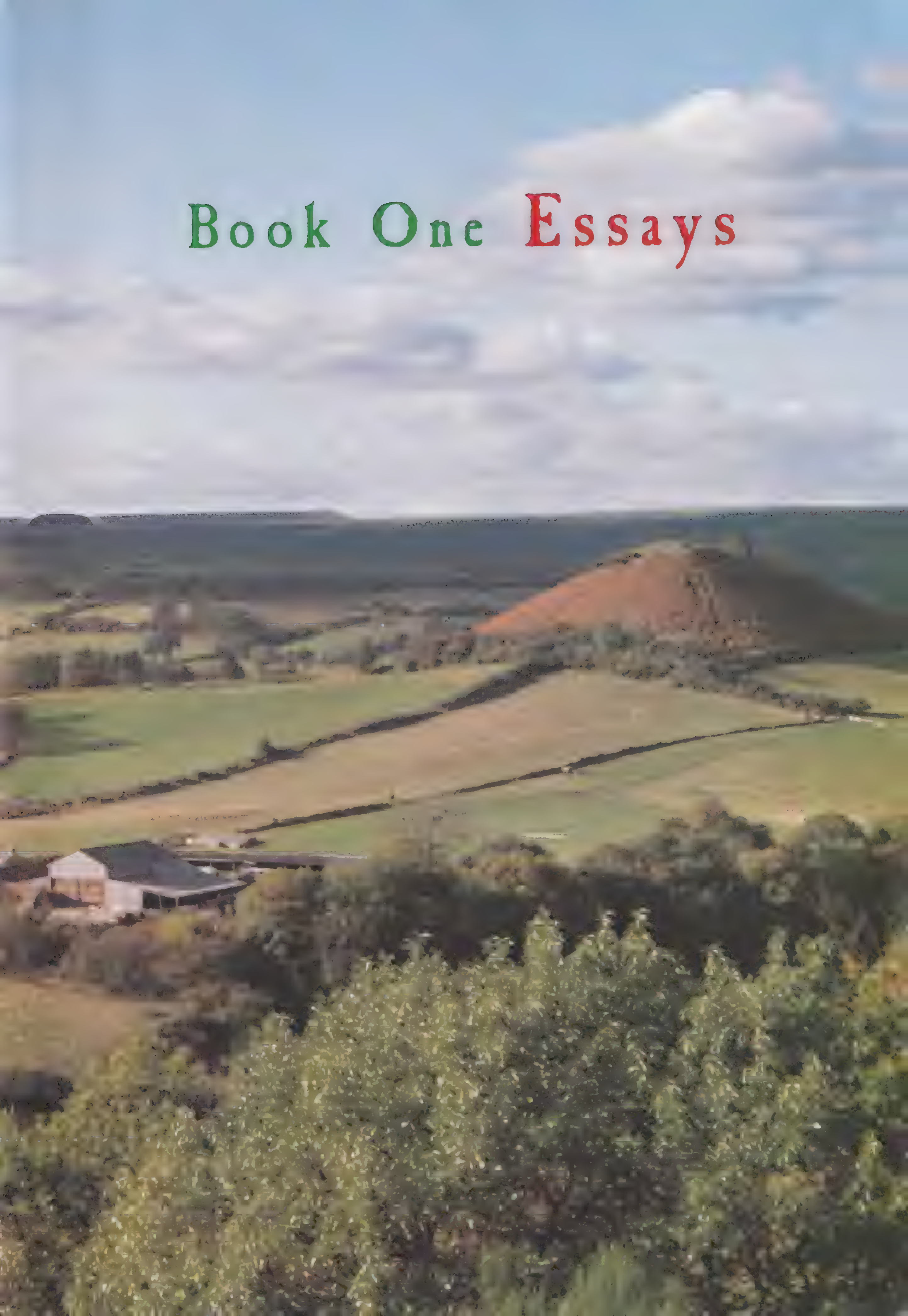
Bestboy
GARY MITCHELL

Marketing
YVETTE COWLES

Press
MEGAN SLYFIELD & MICK HOUGHTON

Coordination
TIM NELSON

Book One Essays



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CHAPTER

one

In Search of Megalithic Britain

'That the island of Britain was the seat of the development of a cultus and secret tradition of extraordinary vitality and individuality is no new thesis.'

LEWIS SPENCE, *THE MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN*

'But it is not documents that are the historian's guide… The English landscape itself, to those who know how to read it right, is the richest historical record we possess.'

W. G. HOSKINS[1]

'It is the usual observation of foreigners that English travellers are too little acquainted with their own country.'

WILLIAM BORLASE, *THE ANTIQUITIES OF CORNWALL*, 1754

The great stones

Perched on hilltops, strewn in raggedy lines across moorland, built into drystone walls and dykes, cursed, cherished or ignored, the Stone Age monuments of the British Isles confound the modern mind with their unfeasible antiquity. Two thousand years ago, at the time of Jesus Christ, the Romans swept across Britain, aligning their roads on Stone Age hill altars[2] and bisecting the sacred landscapes with their straight high-banked military roads of paranoia.[3] Yet, were Jesus Christ to have visited even the most recent of those great megalithic Stone Age monuments, that sacred place would have been older to Jesus than he is to us. For the majority of Britain's stone circles, dolmens and chambered cairns are close to 5,000 years old and they are examples of the very first monuments ever built by Humankind. Before that time we had felt no need for monuments, for the earth was our home and Humanity did not consider itself in any way separate from that earthly home. We worshipped at great waterfalls, sacred trees, or at natural rocky outcrops of significance. But the coming of agriculture brought with it a certain degree of independence and control over the land. Humanity was freed from its Mother's apron strings and the direct response to this new freedom and control was the erecting of great stone monuments: the coming of the megalithic culture.

---

[1] This is one of five quotes from Professor W. G. Hoskins reproduced in Kenneth Watts' 1993 book *The Marlborough Downs*. Hoskins appears to have been an early 20th-century scholar with a strong mystical bent. Unfortunately, Watts' book (like many local publications) claims no provenance for these quotes.

[2] Examples are Brinklow on the Fosse Way (east of Coventry); and Silbury at 2. a) 9

[3] Examples are the Ure–Swale monuments near Boroughbridge at 3. c) 10 and the bisecting of the Dorset cursus by the Ackling Dyke Roman road at 2. b) 5

As the Roman road east from Morgan's Hill crosses the Marlborough Downs, it is here aligned directly on Silbury, from a distance of almost two miles.

The term 'megalithic', Greek for 'great stone', is something of a misnomer. In actuality, the greatest Stone Age temples of all were the huge embanked earth rings known as henges,[4] and the cursuses[5] – similarly embanked parallel lines of ceremonial pathways, often several miles long. In certain, mainly eastern, parts of Britain, where there was no great stone available, huge timber circles were erected and mortuary houses were constructed from enormous logs. But over the millennia, the banks of many of our greatest earth monuments were, inevitably, ploughed down by agriculture and their ditches silted up, and even the thickest timbers eroded and returned to the soil. Eventually, only the great stones remained conspicuous enough to give their name to a virtually obliterated culture. And in their own locality these sites became places of myth and mystery, for they were considered rude, unfinished things, yet they exerted an undeniable force on the visitor. A stone circle made of all-white quartz,[6] an alignment of four great stones each marked with carvings of rings and cups,[7] a Hebridean cairn of Lewissian gneiss, a crystalline rock which shines for miles in the moonlight,[8] a huge tripod of bluestone with a megalithic roof perched so high upon its three upright supporters that a man could ride a horse under the lintel,[9] all were built by people of the Stone Age using ox shoulder blade shovels and deer antler pickaxes, before the age of metals, even before the invention of the wheel or the introduction of the horse ... when the world was pregnant with expectation.

Stonehenge as a political monument

It is ironic and wholly incorrect, therefore, that the much later Stonehenge[G] has come to internationally symbolise Britain's megalithic culture, for that temple is hardly a rough stone monument at all. In actuality, Stonehenge was a fashioned Bronze Age power statement, built by incomers centuries after the height of megalith building; an endpiece, a *sonnembonnem*, at odds with the harmonic precepts that lay at the heart of the original builders' beliefs. By the time the trilithons of Stonehenge rose upon Salisbury Plain, the Neolithic monument builders, who had had 2,800 years to perfect their craft,[10] had been almost totally usurped/by the incoming metalworkers. This is not to deny Stonehenge's glorious cosmic achievement nor its brazen uniqueness, but it is specifically this uniqueness which makes Stonehenge highly unrepresentative of anything but itself. Like the Great Pyramid of Cheops, Stonehenge stands so separate from the rest of its own culture that some scholars have, over recent centuries, been driven to look for its builders outside the British Isles.

In 1906, Edgar Barclay's *The Ruined Temple Stonehenge* proposed the monument as a kind of Roman 'youth opportunities scheme'(!), devised to bring the warring ancient British tribes together. In July 1953, the discovery on one of the Stonehenge trilithons of a carved Bronze Age dagger pushed scholars to declare its architect and builder to have been a travelling Mycenaean prince. Most recently, in February 1997 CE, the visionary archaeologist Aubrey Burl suggested a Breton origin for the monument.[11] Burl considers that Stonehenge's use of sarsen stones from the same Fyfield Down source as its predecessor, the great Avebury stone circle,[G] was meant as an act of domination rather than one of camaraderie or deference. But even if Burl's theory of a Breton origin for Stonehenge is untrue, certainly its use of materials from Avebury's source does indeed suggest an act of Bronze Age politics. Similarly, the smaller and tooled bluestones which make up the interior Stonehenge ring show signs of having been part of a former megalithic structure possibly brought from West Wales. There is even a legend which

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[4] Examples are the Thornborough henges at 3. c) 10 and Arbor Low at 3. b) 2

[5] Examples are the Gypsey Race at 3. c) 5 and the Stonehenge cursus at 2. b) 20

[6] Duloe, Cornwall is at 1. b) 3

[7] Ballymeanoch in the Kilmartin Valley at 6. a) 3

[8] Barpa Langass on North Uist at 7. b) 1

[9] Pentre Ifan overlooking Cardigan Bay, West Wales at 4. b) 6

[10] Current dating systems place Stonehenge's trilithons phase around 2000 BCE. The chambered mound and stone circle at Kercado near Carnac, Brittany, is the oldest monument of megalithic culture, currently dated 4800 BCE.

[11] Passnotes, *Guardian*, February 1997 CE

Unlike the rest of the deeply traditional and slow-to-change megalithic culture from whence it sprang, Stonehenge bristles with novelties. The astounding effects of the free-standing stone doorways, or trilithons, is found nowhere else along the western seaboard of European Neolithic culture.

tells how Merlin used 'engines' to bring the stones all the way from Killarus in Ireland. That a master magician such as Merlin chose to use 'engines' for the task, when he could so easily have opted for high magic, suggests further political motives. Hidden agendas abounded at the shadowy birth of Stonehenge.

Let us instead move the twenty miles north to that temple's far earlier predecessor – Avebury upon the Marlborough Downs. For it is here, within the precincts of Avebury's great Neolithic centre, that we will see at work a teeming microcosm of Stone Age culture. And it is at Avebury that we can best study ourselves – late 20th-century Humankind – for the Neolithic temple builders are our most *recent* ancient relatives.

For though these people could be considered by Romantics to have been a part of some lost Golden Age, in reality they were the first instigators of our own era. This is highly important to understand because the ticking time-bomb of Apocalypse forever seemingly about to explode around us was inadvertently set off by those first temple builders. The joyous and unconscious act of erecting a standing stone in response to the jubilation of learning to farm may have been the single specifically inharmonious act which has become known biblically as the Fall. For it was at this moment that humans first peeled themselves away from the Mother Earth just long enough to feel a true Separation. And it was here that the first feelings of 'I' and 'we' exploded in human consciousness.

However, in gazing long and hard at the great megalithic remains in all their outrageously beautiful forms – stone circles, ellipses, ovals and alignments, trapezoidal mounds, stone cruciforms and Xs strewn throughout these British Isles and beyond – it is almost impossible to view such exquisite work as part of a great tragedy. Nevertheless, setting up great stones was an enormous psychological act, still further removing the agriculturists from their formerly harmonious relationship with the earth. And it is that initial separation from the earth, over 5,000 years ago, which has opened up into such a great cleft over the ensuing years and caused so great a feeling of cultural dispossession and hopeless guilt in much of modern Humanity.

Many city-dwellers are now so removed from the land that they do not even know that it is still out there for them. Visiting and studying the temples of the Neolithic peoples is in itself a highly nourishing and healing act, for it reveals the Ancients to be just as stubborn and obsessive and over-achieving as ourselves. In our neurotic ignorance and surrounded by environmental disasters, late 20th-century people are like 16-year-olds who believe their cynical teacher when he tells them that they are the worst pupils he has ever known, unaware that it is the same line he has peddled to everyone he has ever taught. So it is quite a relief when we shine a torch into the shadows of prehistory and discover that 5,000 years ago wasteful Neolithic slash & burn farming techniques caused environmental ruin – somehow our justified modern neuroses are made less difficult to bear. And when we discover that even 2,500 years ago ancient Britons were fighting population explosions and lack of space, merely the realisation that we are not alone in our predicament is a highly uplifting experience. An awareness of our ancient past is essential for Humankind as we slip into this new millennium, for the past 2,000 years of Roman Christianity have set up within us a deep denial of this island earth. In its rush to secure its place as the world's premier religion, Christianity has severely compromised its own roots, preaching dominion over the land from pulpits within roofed churches. Yet early Christian chapels were unroofed temples of stone and earth,[12] often built on the sites of stone circles[13] or utilising a large rugged stone cross[14] set in a pyramidal stone base. And considering the Romans mistook early Christians for sun worshippers,[15] it was a horribly cynical act for the medieval Church to have made such war upon the 'heathen temples' of the Old Religion. For the heathen were merely 'the people of the heath', the very place where early Christians themselves used to worship.

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[12] See keeills in the Isle of Man at 5. c)

[13] See Chapter 10, 'The circular churchyards – Dark Age relics of the Great Goddess', page 142

[14] See the rugged cross at 4. a) 5 Trellech churchyard

[15] John North, *Stonehenge: Neolithic Man & his Cosmos*

Clearly, we must pay close regard to these past 2,000 years of Roman Christianity, for a considerable amount of psychologically harmful misinformation has been preached in the Church's quest for ultimate power. But first we must travel to Avebury, out on the Marlborough Downs, in order to witness Stone Age peoples at the heights of their power. And by gentle comparison of temple to temple, church against stone circle, we may discern both the differences and the similarities of these two religions which began as siblings but grew into entirely opposing species.

For this is to be a Gnostic odyssey.
For what are these places if we do not attempt to visit them first hand?
Let us start at the very centre of the culture – Avebury.

CHAPTER two

The Landscape Temples

'Practically all the holy places in the world have a circle of hills around and it makes something happen. Isn't that odd?'

ROBERT GRAVES, INTERVIEWED BY MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE FOR AN ITV DOCUMENTARY IN 1967

Avebury & the Marlborough Downs

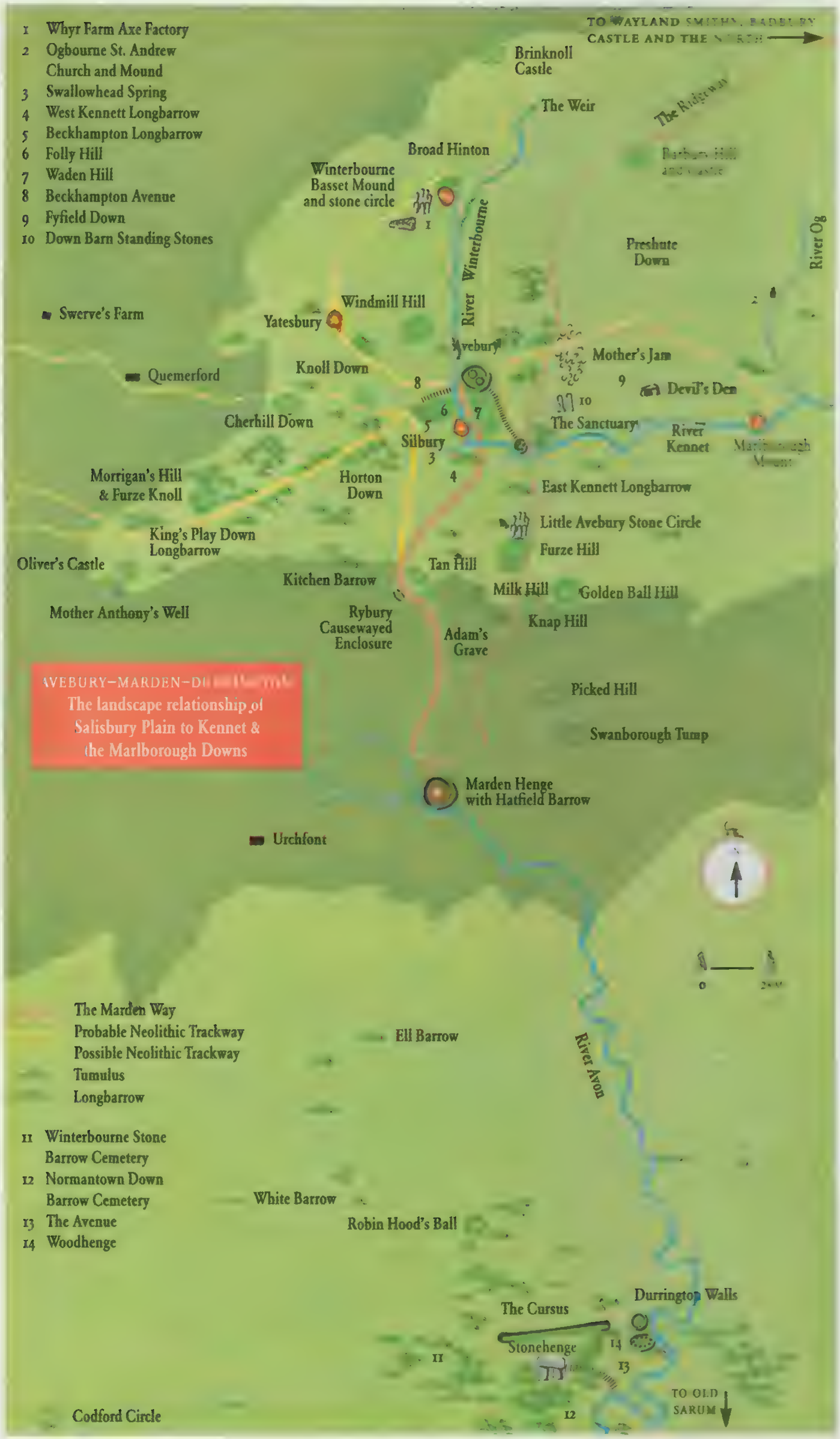
At the great Avebury temple on the Marlborough Downs, in Wiltshire, ancient visitors were presented with a distillation, an overview, of their entire megalithic culture set down in one place. For at Avebury there appears to have been an example or analogue of almost every type of monument found in the European megalithic world. Five thousand years ago, this vast seaboard civilisation ranged from the Baltic in the north to the Iberian peninsula in the south and there were many forms which their earth, stone and timber monuments could take.

There is an enormous variety of Stone Age monuments still found strewn across the Marlborough Downs. This is because Avebury was once the ceremonial centre, the omphalos or sacred Navel, of this great prehistoric culture. For the Ancients, the great trek to Avebury would have been a spiritual confirmation of everything that they believed in and practised and, as such, Avebury had a duty to boost and empower the Stone Age pilgrim. These new agriculturists, so proud of their farming achievements back home, would have been greeted by a downland awash with white chalk mounds and rings surrounded by the finest, most luxurious crops in the whole island. For the custodians of Avebury worked night and day to empower the rest of the Neolithic world. And succeed they did – for over 1,000 years the great chalk massif known as the Marlborough Downs was a Stone Age Mecca, and the Avebury henge was their Kaaba – the Great Black Stone at the very geographical heart of Islam.

But unlike the temples of Islam or its sibling religions, Judaism and Christianity, the great ceremonial centres of 5,000 years ago were landscape temples open to the sky.

And before we consider the various forms of these Neolithic temples which the Avebury builders initiated, copied or modified from experiments in other parts of their culture, let us first understand our own modern Christian prejudices or post-Christian judgements of these earth & sky centres, then we can switch off that old way in an attempt to judge these sacred places with a new eye.

In his *Mysteries of Britain*, Lewis Spence talks about the three stations of the temple. The first station is the pilgrimage to the sacred place, the second is entry into the defined sacred precinct, the third is the personal address with the altar at the very centre of the temple, the sacred omphalos or Navel. For Neolithic people, the sky was the ceiling of their temple and the horizons were its walls – and, in the case of Avebury, the high escarped edges of the Marlborough Downs themselves


AVEBURY–MARDEN–DURRINGTON
The landscape relationship of
Salisbury Plain to Kennet &
the Marlborough Downs
1 Whyr Farm Axe Factory
2 Ogbourne St. Andrew Church and Mound
3 Swallowhead Spring
4 West Kennett Longbarrow
5 Beckhampton Longbarrow
6 Folly Hill
7 Waden Hill
8 Beckhampton Avenue
9 Fyfield Down
10 Down Barn Standing Stones
TO WAYLAND SMITHY'S, BADBURY CASTLE AND THE NORTH
Brinknoll Castle
The Weir
The Ridgeway
Barbury Hill and castle
Broad Hinton
Winterbourne Basset Mound and stone circle
1
River Winterbourne
Preshute Down
River Og
2
Swerve's Farm
Windmill Hill
Yatesbury
Avebury
Mother's Jam
Quemerford
Knoll Down
8
9
Devil's Den
10
6
7
5
Cherhill Down
Silbury
The Sanctuary
River Kennet
Marlborough Mount
3
4
Morrigan's Hill & Furze Knoll
Horton Down
East Kennett Longbarrow
Little Avebury Stone Circle
King's Play Down Longbarrow
Furze Hill
Oliver's Castle
Tan Hill
Kitchen Barrow
Milk Hill
Golden Ball Hill
Mother Anthony's Well
Rybury Causewayed Enclosure
Knap Hill
Adam's Grave
Picked Hill
Swanborough Tump
Marden Henge with Hatfield Barrow
Urchfont
0
2 km
The Marden Way
Probable Neolithic Trackway
Possible Neolithic Trackway
Tumulus
Longbarrow
Ell Barrow
River Avon
11 Winterbourne Stone Barrow Cemetery
12 Normantown Down Barrow Cemetery
13 The Avenue
14 Woodhenge
White Barrow
Robin Hood's Ball
Durrington Walls
The Cursus
14
Stonehenge
11
13
TO OLD SARUM
12
Codford Circle

physically defined the sacred precinct and created a vast and elevated landscape garden temple of around 100 square miles.

For the Neolithics were the last in a long line of ancient people who had worshipped the earth as a Great Mother or Mother Goddess. Long before the temple-building people came, when Humanity still believed that it was the wind and the rivers which caused pregnancy, the earth on which the people of the Stone Ages lived was the Great Mother: an all-giving, all-taking, all-knowing, all-showing Divinity perpetually revealed in the landscape forms and occasionally glimpsed to even greater degree through combinations of fasting, solitude, chanting and repetition, natural psychedelics and some narcotics, deeply concentrated arduous methodical physical exercise, or a pilgrimage to a known and previously tested sacred centre. And here within Avebury's 100-square-mile precinct stood the greatest stone circles, avenues, chambered longbarrows and man-made hill altars in their entire culture. Avebury, Silbury,^G East & West Kennett longbarrows^G and the Sanctuary^G – these great monuments which ranged around the Kennet Valley – functioned separately and independently of each other. But they were also interdependent, that is, each one was a station of the great pilgrimage *within* the Downs' temple precinct.

It is ironic that the architects of the great medieval cathedrals such as Winchester and Chartres went to such lengths to design the illusion of transcendence into their creations, when it could have been achieved far more cheaply and more spectacularly simply by creating a temple which was open to the heavens. For the roofing of a temple is far more than just a psychological disservice to Humanity – it is actually closing off the heavens, the cosmic part of the human psyche which endeavours to 'reach for the stars'. This act simultaneously condemns humans to the lowly earth realm, the very place where the Judaeo-Christians are so unhappy to be.

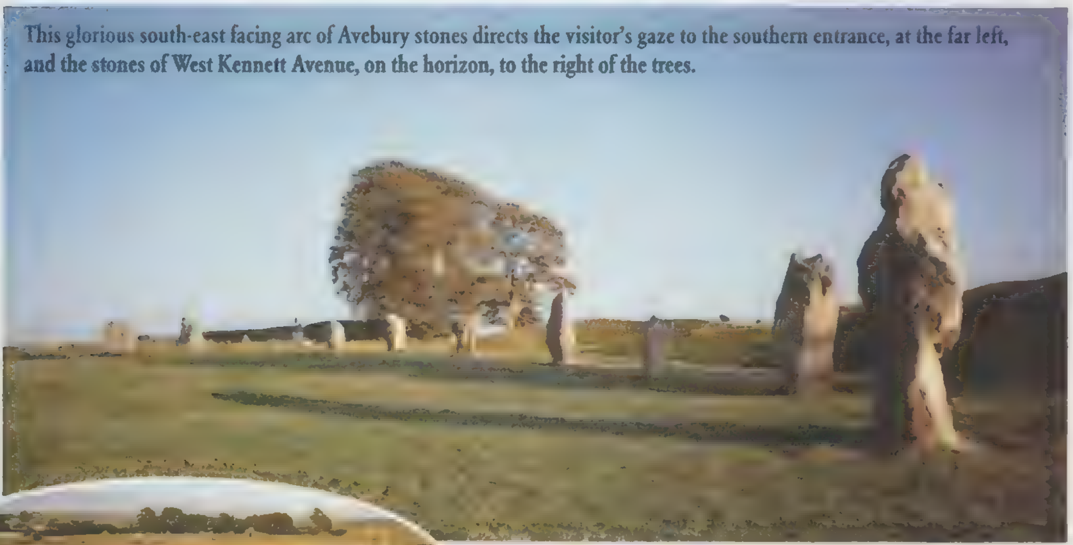
When the great bowler Colin Milburn lost an eye in a car accident, he could no longer judge distances on the playing field and the world lost a great cricketer. Milburn subsequently found himself overusing his remaining eye, developed cataracts and eventually went blind. In effect, praying exclusively indoors has done the same for Humanity. Human beings are naturally polar creations – we have a north and a south, both of which we need: in this way we echo in microcosm the form of our Mother Earth who made us. We are neither entirely-of-the-cosmos nor entirely-of-the-earth: we are both. And if we deny our cosmic or heavenly side we are forced to rely on, and therefore necessarily overuse, our earthly side. No small wonder, then, that we have come to feel shackled to this earthly realm.

Yet, as we have already seen from the outdoor nature of early Christian worship, in terms of the lifespan of Humanity this creeping away from the land happened only yesterday. Indeed, we have looked this way and had similar capabilities for the past 50,000 years, so it is always possible that this 5,000 year 'lapse' is not irreversible. But enough, let us now move on and look more closely at the megalithic culture which Avebury so righteously represented.

Certain quadrants of the great henge at Avebury have few remaining stones, yet the magnificent sweep created by the sheer depth of the ditch is still staggering. The Neolithic farmers created a powerful stability in their culture, with enough surplus food and free time to build huge ceremonial monuments, indeed these huge landscape creations of earth, stone and timber were the very first monuments of Humankind.

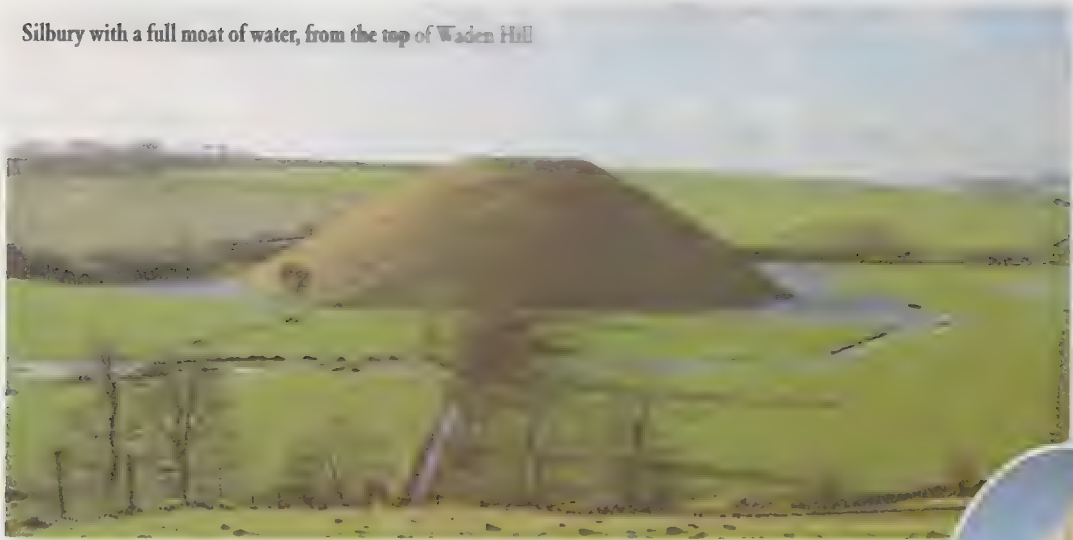
At the Avebury Cove, only two of the original three stones remain.
A painting of 1825 shows a large phallic stone, now destroyed, which appears to be addressing the Cove stones.

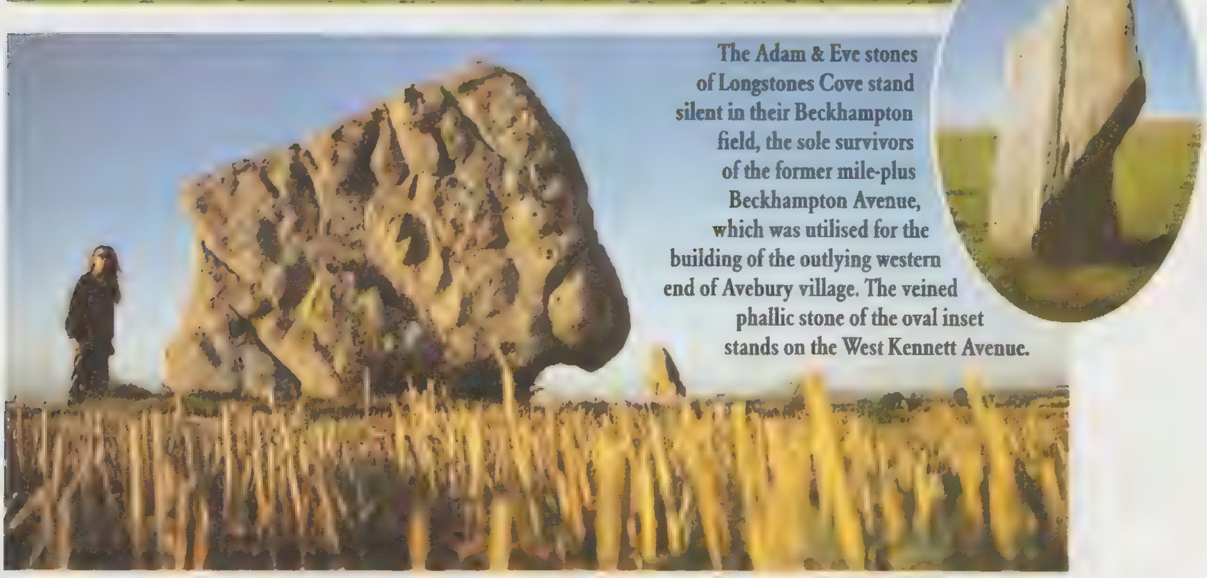
This glorious south-east facing arc of Avebury stones directs the visitor's gaze to the southern entrance, at the far left, and the stones of West Kennett Avenue, on the horizon, to the right of the trees.



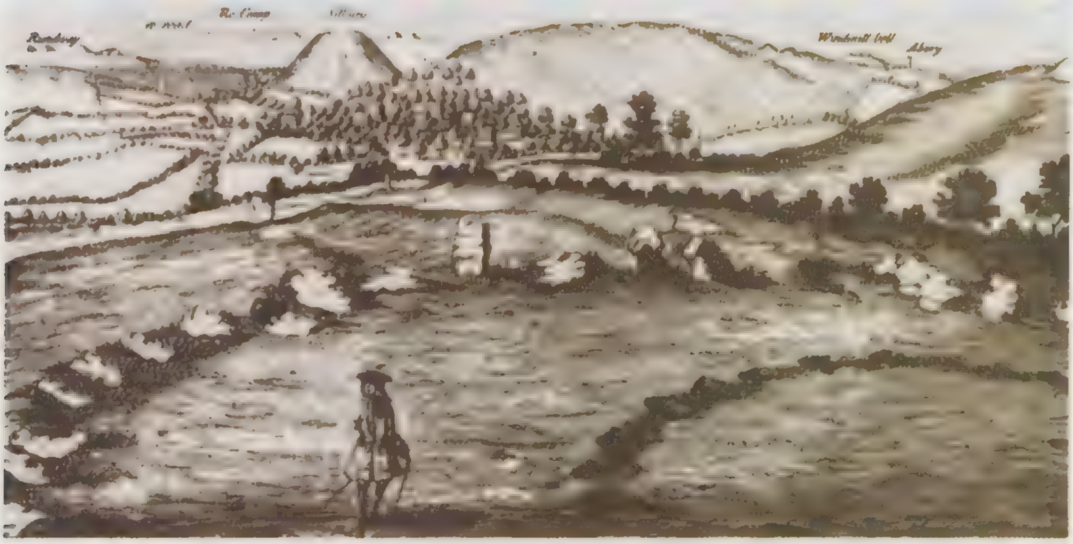
The southern circle and great circle are here seen from the top of the Avebury henge.

Silbury with a full moat of water, from the top of Waden Hill





The Adam & Eve stones of Longstones Cove stand silent in their Beckhampton field, the sole survivors of the former mile-plus Beckhampton Avenue, which was utilised for the building of the outlying western end of Avebury village. The veined phallic stone of the oval inset stands on the West Kennett Avenue.



This engraving of William Stukeley's drawing is the sole surviving record of the temple on Overton Hill in its final stone circle form. Less than one year later, the stones were carted away by a local farmer called Green.

LEFT: The great bank barrows of the Neolithic were gargantuan constructions found in Dorset.
© Terence Meaden/Fortean Picture Library

BELOW: On the Isle of Skye, the two hilltop cairns of Vatten, to the right of the photograph, mirror the plateau-topped shapes of the distant McLeod Table mountains, to the left.

MIDDLE BELOW: The Tumulus St. Michel, on the outskirts of Carnac in Brittany, is today the most recognisable of all the remaining Carnac Grand Tumuli. Here, the levelled summit and chapel are clearly seen.

BOTTOM: Mane Er Hroek – Though reduced to overgrown anonymity supporting the gardens of Locmariaquer holiday homes, it is still possible to investigate the 6,000-year-old central chamber of this mystical mound in Brittany.

Forms of the Neolithic temples

Travelling around the remains of megalithic Europe is a bewildering and uplifting experience. All along the 2,500-mile-plus seaboard, the traveller is constantly reminded of the huge range of psyches involved in the building of these sacred sites, as hundreds of great mounds are encountered, many with deep ditches and even deeper ritual chambers. The greatest Neolithic mound in all Europe stood next to Avebury on the Marlborough Downs. But this mound, known as Silbury, was more analogous to natural conical hills than the vast scatterings of long mounds which lay around the culture.

Great longbarrows of earth and chalk, some of them up to 300 feet long, proliferated across southern Britain. But they failed to improve on the natural drama of their landscapes, for these were harmonious monuments and this was not their purpose. Only the bank barrows of Dorset were truly colossal constructions. The example found at Maiden Castle[G] lies 1,800 feet long across the spine of this sacred hill, its huge lateral ditches lying over 100 feet apart. In Scotland, the longbarrows were mirrored by long cairns, each one an enormous pile of stones set over a great burial chamber at its centre. Most have been wretchedly ransacked over the millennia, but the two unplundered cairns of Vatten,[G] on the Isle of Skye, still retain their exhilarating ridge-backed construction, mirroring the two great MacLeod table mountains to their north.

Carnac in Brittany was a place of obsessive long-mound builders and seven gigantic 'grand tumuli' were constructed, heaped over single chambers with no passageway at all. Their grave goods held unbelievable wealth,[1] and even in their present state of ruin, two, Mane Er Hroek and Mane Lud, are still big enough to act as natural hills with houses and gardens built into them, whilst the Tumulus St. Michel is one of Carnac's focal points, large enough to house a small chapel and a Calvary along its flat summit.[2]

At the bend in the Boyne river, north of Dublin, three huge mounds were built within sight of each other – Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange. Again, these mounds were so big that they were later mistaken for natural hills, yet excavations at Knowth since 1962 have proven that this 'megalithic hill' began as a single line of timber poles; for its first 500 years were spent as an ever-changing astronomical observatory without so much as the erecting of a standing stone or the turning of a sod of earth. This staggering time-scale – in which half a millennium can be devoted entirely to the observation of the heavens – is utterly alien to our modern linear thought, which moves further into hyper-drive the closer we come to the new millennium. Christian culture inevitably thinks of time in a linear form, with a beginning and an end. This is because Christ preached Armageddon and an end to the world, whereas ancient farming societies had only ever experienced life as a circle, revolving around the endless agricultural Wheel of Life.

In Britain, the obsession grew for enormous circular earth henges – great rings quite out of proportion with other monuments of the contemporary culture. The Avebury henge had been built by digging an enormous circular ditch a quarter of a mile in diameter into the hard chalk of the Marlborough Downs with deer antler pickaxes. The digging was so intense that the ditches were twenty-seven feet deep in places. All the material created by the digging was then shovelled up with ox shoulder blades and thrown outside to create the effect of a banked amphitheatre, inward-looking and twenty feet high. It was only then that the great stones from Fyfield Down, two miles to the east, were finally erected within the henge.

And though Avebury is the most famous example, two even larger henges remain to the south, now both horribly ploughed and battered. The largest of all henges is at Durrington, two miles east of Stonehenge. This 1,640-feet earth ring,

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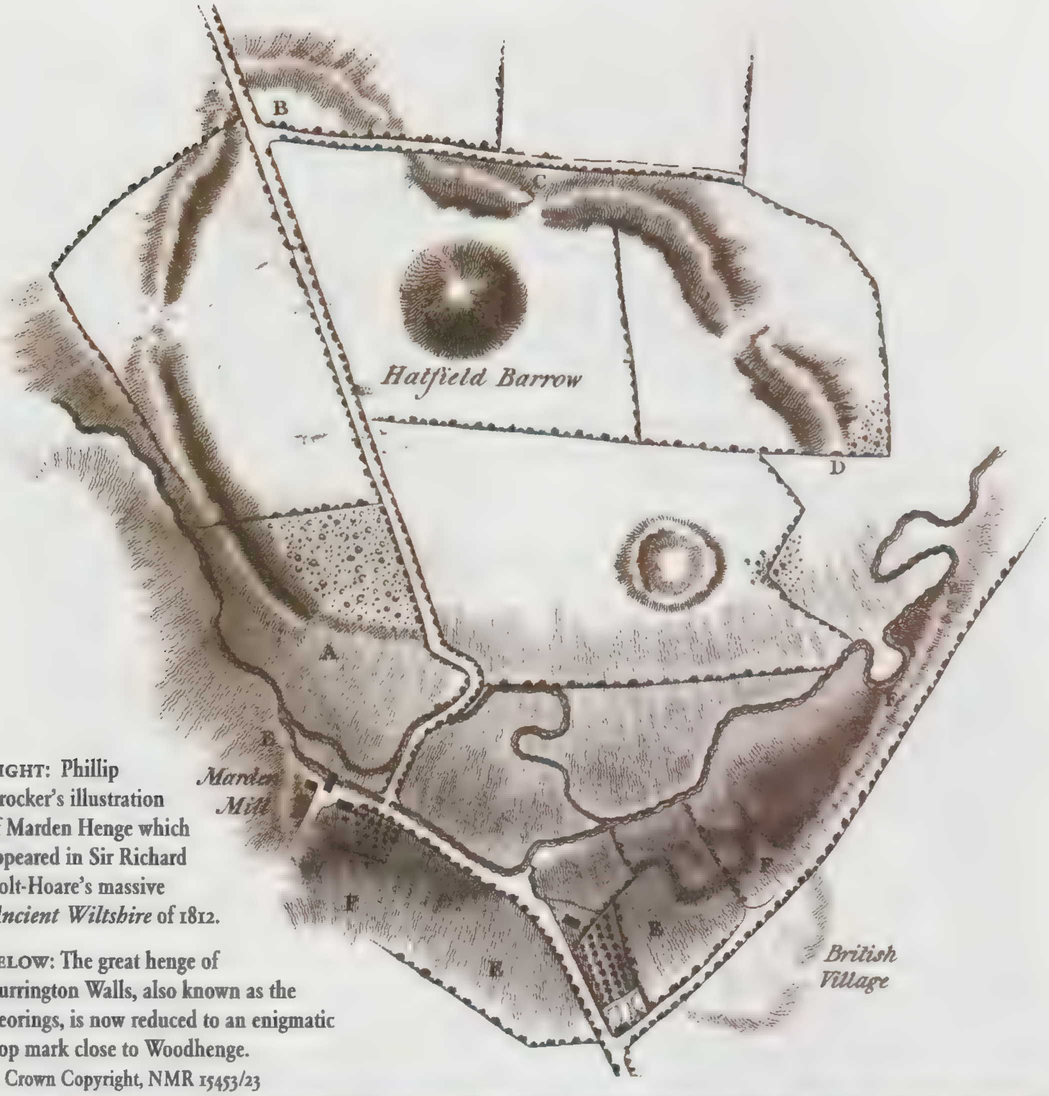
[1] Unbelievable wealth – 106 polished stone-axe heads – a hoard which takes up two large rooms of the Vannes Museum. The greatest ceremonial axe from Mane Er Hroek is about eighteen inches long.

[2] So large were these 'grand tumuli' that the long mound of Kerlud was only completely swallowed up when it was used to build a farm and an entire village. Its chamber still stands in the corner of the field opposite the farmyard, used as a refuge for children's muddy games.


B
C
Hatfield Barrow
D
A
E
Marden Mill
F
E
B
F
British Village

RIGHT: Phillip Crocker's illustration of Marden Henge which appeared in Sir Richard Colt-Hoare's massive *Ancient Wiltshire* of 1812.

BELOW: The great henge of Durrington Walls, also known as the Deorings, is now reduced to an enigmatic crop mark close to Woodhenge.
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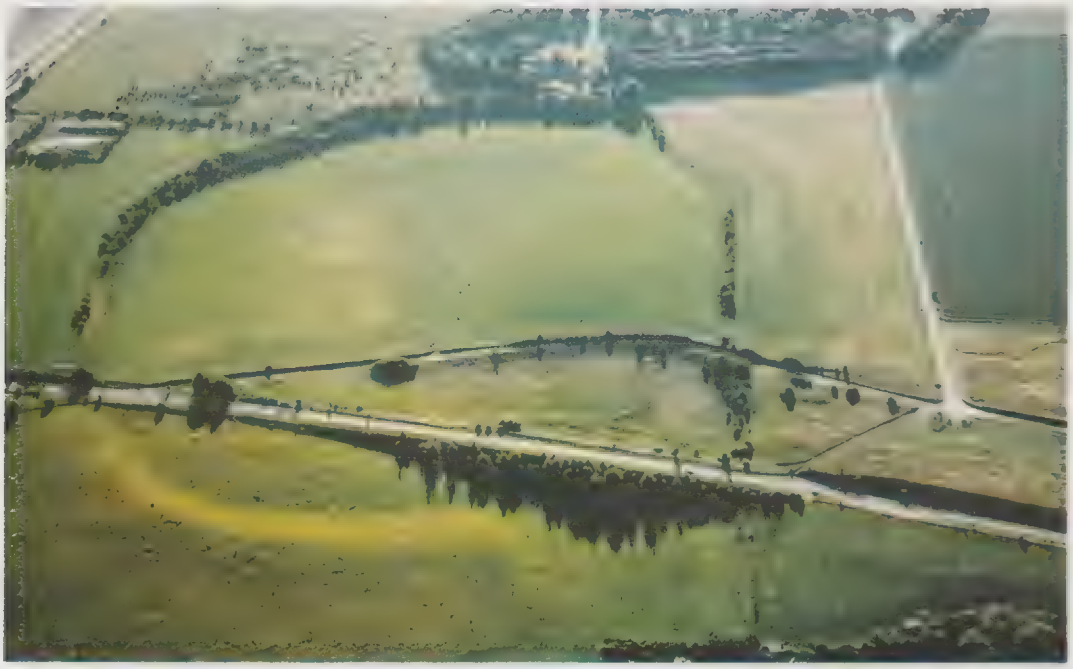

formerly known as the Deorings (or Deer Ring), has been proposed as a 'Neolithic university', for it contained the finest bone carvings and deer antlers and because of its close proximity to the much later Stonehenge 'project'. The other behemoth was the oval henge known as Marden, which was constructed on the banks of the Avon. This central site created a direct link between the peoples of Stonehenge and Durrington and those of Avebury.

In the north of England, on the great sacred landscape of the Ure–Swale Plateau,[G] six henges were built in close proximity. Three at Thornborough were sprinkled with white gypsum crystal to resemble the chalk banks of Avebury and aligned on another henge at Nunwick, a couple of miles to the south-east.[3] In Cumbria, Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table,[G] two entirely different types of henge, were linked together beside the river Eamont. Whilst King Arthur's Round Table is a typically green earth monument, Mayburgh is a ditchless affair, achieved by stacking up thousands upon thousands of water-washed pebbles from the river in an enormous circle with banks twenty feet high.

Far south in Dorset, the once enormous, now obliterated hilltop henge at Mount Pleasant was linked to the smaller Maumbury Ring,[G] further down the hill and now swallowed up by modern Dorchester. Far to the north on the idyllic Orkney Mainland, close to the legendary Neolithic mound of Maeshowe, the great henges of Brogar and Stenness[G] were linked by a most poetic avenue of standing stones which crossed the narrow isthmus of land at the Ness of Brogar. All these paired henges are echoed at Avebury in that great henge's link to the Sanctuary at the Ridgeway's end on Overton Hill.

In Carnac, great multiple lines of standing stones crossed the country, stones far larger than those seen in most British sites. Until they were used to build houses in the early 19th century, those stone rows at Kerzerho began at the great Crucuno Rectangle, a squared setting of huge standing stones used as a symbolic astronomical observatory. The Kerzerho rows then travelled west almost two miles, probably ending in a great semi-circle,[4] what the Bretons call a *cromlech*. There are two other huge cromlechs in Carnac,[5] the semi-circle being more popular in Brittany than the circle itself.

This love of great stone shapes is echoed throughout Europe: at Achavanich, Loch Stemster,[G] in the Highlands of Scotland, there is an enormous megalithic 'U' formation; in the Kilmartin Valley,[G] in Lowland Scotland, there is a great 'X' which is constructed of beautiful large uprights full of carvings. Down on the Iberian peninsula, in the Portuguese olive groves, stands the masterpiece known as the Cromeleque dos Almendres. This huge 'figure of 8' is constructed of enormous rounded red sandstone boulders, many of them carved with cup-marks and crescents. The formation of the '8' was achieved using double rows of these huge stones, creating a magnificent series of disorientating avenues. Elsewhere, the legendary Portuguese burial mounds, or Antas, which had dolmens up to twenty feet tall inside,[6] have recently been radiocarbon dated to the beginnings of megalithic culture. Portugal is also filled with rock-cut tombs – Neolithic burial places exhaustively cut out of solid rock with deer antlers. There are even rock-cut tombs at Delphi, the heart of ancient Greece. But here at the legendary Temple of Apollo, travellers are on such a Classical trip that most do not even notice them. Ironically, rock-cut tombs are deadly rare in the rest of Europe, only two examples appearing in the whole of the British Isles.[7]

Moving far north to Sweden and the Shetland Isles, great megalithic boat shapes are to be found on hilltops and in pleasant antiquarian groves planted in the last two centuries. Until recently, these monuments were believed to have been of the Viking period, but recent discoveries have pushed the likely age of these constructions back and back to 2000 BCE. These Swedish sites are as well built as many of Britain's earliest monuments, and one particular stone boat, the great hilltop creation known as Ale's Stenar (pronounced

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[3] Thornborough is at 3. c) 10

[4] Aubrey Burl, *Megalithic Brittany*

[5] The most easily accessible cromlech is at Le Menec, where the semi-circle has been incorporated into villagers' gardens. At Kerlescan, the cromlech has been off-limits due to reseeding since 1993 CE.

[6] Example is Anta Grande do Zojeiro, near Evora

[7] Examples are St. Kevin's Bed, in Ireland, and the Dwarfie Stane at 7. c) 1

TOP: At the head of Loch Stemster, in the far north-east of Scotland, stands the Great 'U' of Achavanich.
ABOVE: The carved stones of the Great 'X' stand in the finest megalithic centre in Lowland Scotland.
OPPOSITE PAGE: In the olive groves of southern Portugal stand the stones of Cromeleque dos Almendres. This much battered figure of 8 is constructed of huge egg-shaped stones similar in size to those of Long Meg, in Cumbria.

'Olay's Shteenar'), is constructed entirely of great pillars extremely reminiscent of Long Meg, the legendary sandstone outlier of Little Salkend in Cumbria.[8]

Whilst the European megalith builders universally erected great standing stones and various forms of long or round chambered mounds or cairns, it was only in the British Isles that stone circles were found, though there is a fantastic range of styles and techniques here which travel under that rather loaded umbrella term 'stone circle'.

By far the most obsessive circle-builders were the moon watchers of the Grampian Highlands of eastern Scotland. Up here at 57° latitude, the moon's erratic dance across the sky at all times skims the south-westerly horizon, a phenomenon that enthralled and obsessed the Ancients. To celebrate and emphasise this delightful event, stone circles were erected on the south-westerly shelves of river valleys, and a large flat altar stone, like some great megalithic dresser, was placed at the south-west corner, level with the horizon. These altars, which have come to be known (somewhat misleadingly) as Recumbent stones, were vast – and the largest examples weighed fifty tons or more.[9] The ancient architects utilised incredible skills in rocking these giants into position against the horizon, and great care was taken to make the operation appear effortless.[10] The Recumbent stone was abutted at each end by two tall pillars, or flankers, and the rest of the circle stones descended in size around the circumference until, opposite the enormous Recumbent stone at 180°, stood the smallest upright of the ring. It is likely that the enthralled and nervous initiate would have stood here to view the transits of the moon at significant times of the year, the vast bulk of the Recumbent stone overshadowing the diminutive scale of the initiate's stone – all serving to further implant in them the awesome scale of the event which they had just witnessed.

At the bend in the Boyne, north of Dublin, another distant relative of the Grampian Recumbents was built at Newgrange.[11] This enormous chambered mound surrounded by a large stone circle is an analogue of the earliest known megalithic structure, Kercado in Brittany, which is currently dated at 4800 BCE, over two millennia before the Egyptians' great pyramids. This type of combination stone circle and mound is also discovered in profusion on the British mainland in the Inverness area of Highland Scotland.[12] Further south, Cumbria was filled with great open rings of huge boulders, sometimes set in the thrall of significant sacred hills.[13] At the Land's End and on Bodmin Moor, the Cornish circle builders chose far more and far smaller stones for their similarly huge open rings.[14] Curiously, Wales has no large stone circles, other than the mythical ruins of Tre'r Dryw.[G] But the hillsides are overrun with huge standing stones and dolmens, and those tiny stone circles which remain are often in landscape positions of inspired genius.[15] Clearly, the size of the stones depended on each individual site, but it must be remembered that Humanity was erecting its very first monuments and still wished to create balance and harmony within the perceived sacred area. Indeed, sometimes this will appear to be a tale of monuments which fit into the landscape so well that you can barely tell they are there.[16]

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8 Long Meg & her Daughters are at 3. a) 9

9 Examples are Old Keig at 7. a) 12 and Hawk Hill which stands on the Aberdeenshire farm of New Mains of Edingarioch

10 Examples are Hatton of Ardoyne, Balquain at 7. a) 5 and Inschfield one mile north of Dunnideer

11 Newgrange appears to be linked to the Recumbent stone circles through its great spiral carved entrance stone, via the Clava Cairns and, specifically, the Loanhead of Daviot circle. In *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*, Aubrey Burl writes, 'Contacts between north-east Ireland and north-east Scotland are well attested during the third and second millennium BC.'

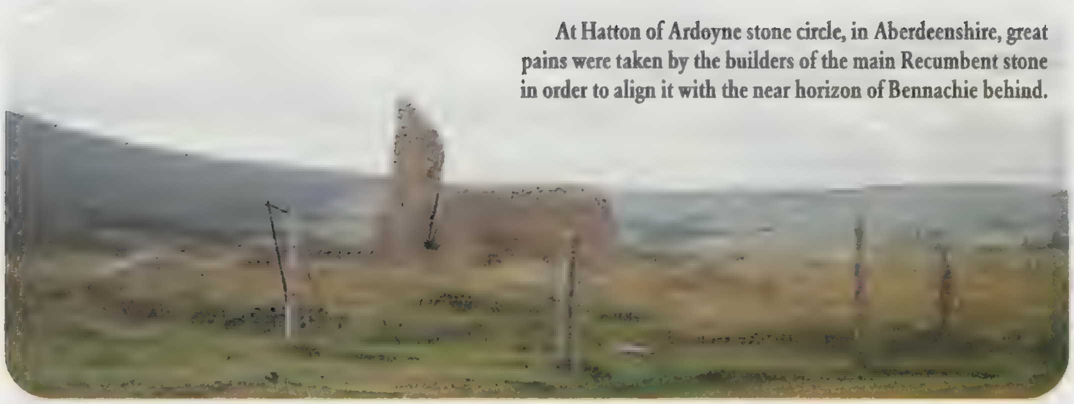
12 Examples are Corrimony at 7. d) 2 and Clava at 7. d) 1

13 Examples are Sunkenkirk at 3. a) 11, which has a sacred hill in the form of Swinside, and the three ruined stone circles sighted on Black Combe – see the Giant's Grave at 3. a) 5. There are many later family-type miniature Cumbrian circles such as Castlehowe Scar, but these are much later decadent forms. Like post-war replacement churches, which were often designed by agnostics hoping merely to enrich their CV, many much later stone monuments appear to exist for tradition's sake, as though the only reason for building the thing was 'because we always have done'.

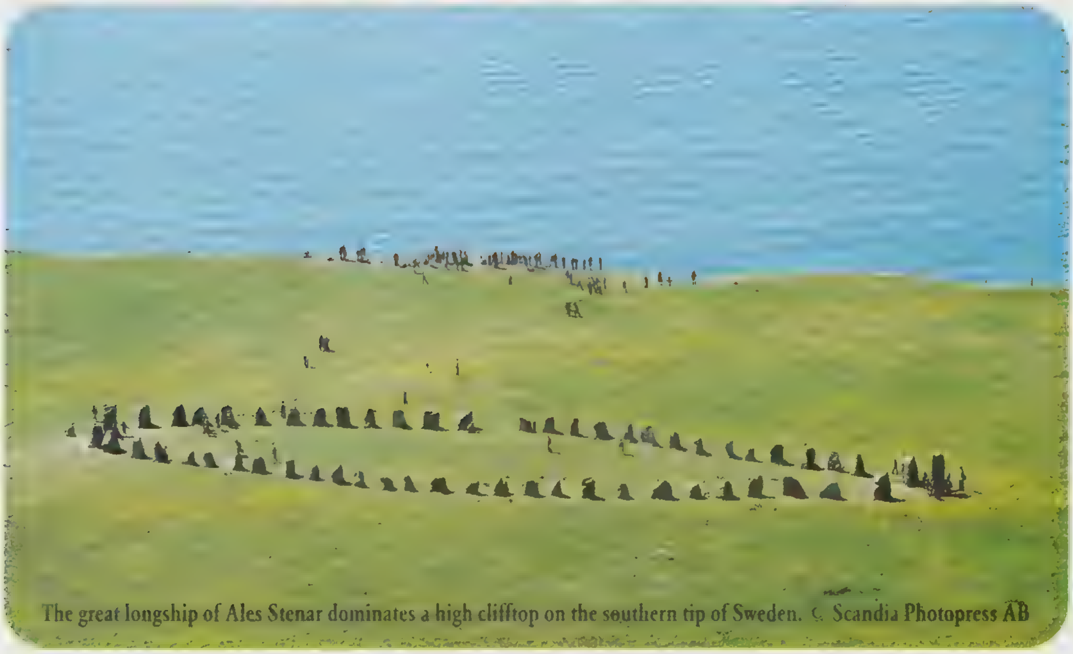
14 Examples are Boskawen-Un at 1. a) 2 and the Merry Maidens at 1. a) 10

15 Examples are Moel ty Uchaf at 5. b) 10 and Cerrig Duon at 4. a) 3

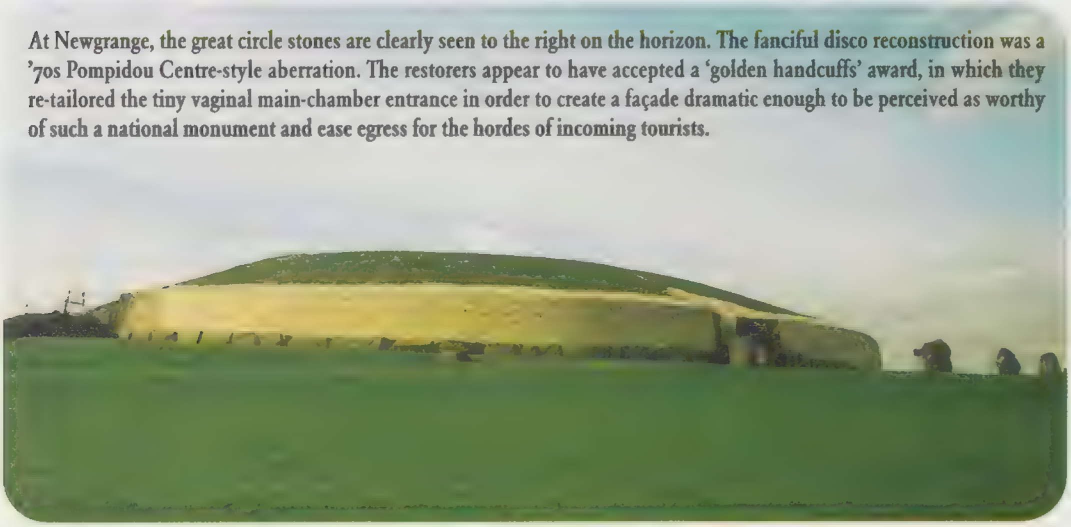
16 Examples are the Bride Mounds at 5. c) and the Fairy Knowe at 7. c) 2



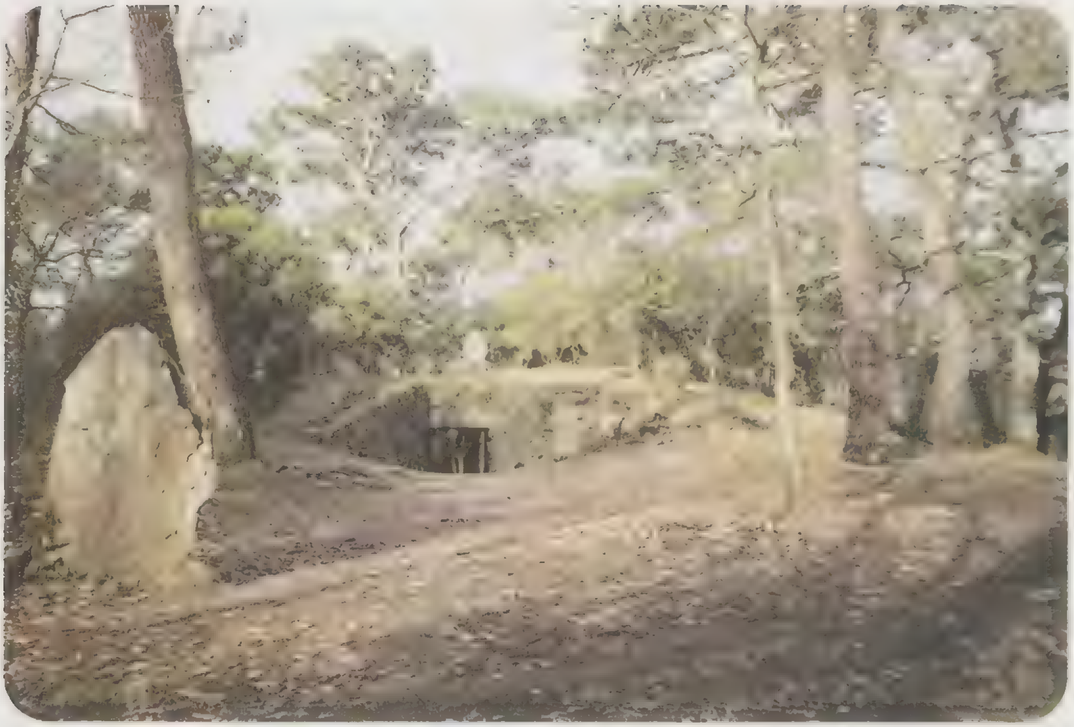
At Hatton of Ardoyne stone circle, in Aberdeenshire, great pains were taken by the builders of the main Recumbent stone in order to align it with the near horizon of Bennachie behind.

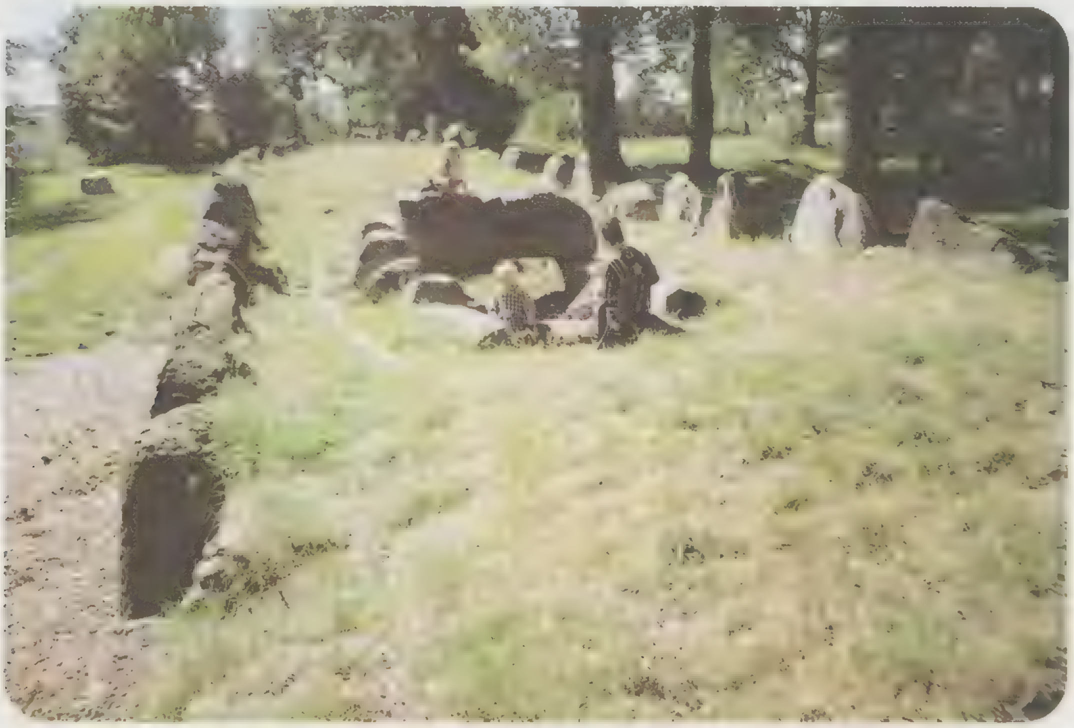


The great longship of Ales Stenar dominates a high clifftop on the southern tip of Sweden. © Scandia Photopress AB



At Newgrange, the great circle stones are clearly seen to the right on the horizon. The fanciful disco reconstruction was a '70s Pompidou Centre-style aberration. The restorers appear to have accepted a 'golden handcuffs' award, in which they re-tailored the tiny vaginal main-chamber entrance in order to create a façade dramatic enough to be perceived as worthy of such a national monument and ease egress for the hordes of incoming tourists.





TOP: Kercado in Brittany is the oldest megalithic site known, currently dated at 4800 BCE. This chambered round-mound with its surrounding stone circle became an archetype copied in the Highlands of Scotland, at Clava and at Newgrange on Ireland's river Boyne. Kercado was built almost 3,000 years before Stonehenge.
ABOVE: At Schimeres, in northern Holland, this be-dolmened megalithic longship appears to be midway between Ales Stenar in Sweden and Wayland's Smithy in Berkshire.

CHAPTER

three

The Ascent of Ma

'The concept of a creative goddess was banned by Christian theologians almost two thousand years ago, and by Jewish theologians long before that.'

ROBERT GRAVES, *THE WHITE GODDESS*

'All mention of the Great Mother is omitted from the Bible. This in itself exposes the existing texts as priestly propaganda masquerading as divinely-inspired history, for it was not the male but the female who was predominant in the early days both in the religious and social spheres.'

ALAN J. INSOLE, *IMMORTAL BRITAIN*

'It would not be an exaggeration to say that the belief in the Great Goddess covered the whole of the ancient world.'

T. C. LETHBRIDGE, *WITCHES*

'The temple of the great goddess ... should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.'

NEW TESTAMENT, ACTS 19:27

The Mother cave of the New Stone Age

High upon Pomona, the sacred Orkney Mainland, at the top of Cuween Hill rests the Fairy Knowe,[G] a female temple so perfectly placed within the landscape that its mound resembles nothing less than the pudendum of the Great Goddess. The Fairy Knowe is visible from over two miles away to those who know where she is, but invisible at 200 yards to those who do not. Yet within this fertile micro-mound lies an extensive and magnificently constructed five-chambered cairn. All the Orcadian tombs are masterpieces – the flat flagstone of the islands is horizontally stratified and this clearly pushed the Neolithics in Orkney to even greater heights of achievement. And at the Fairy Knowe, the triumphant subtlety with which this enormous structure is assimilated into the surrounding landscape declares itself as a great magic to modern pilgrims, themselves often visiting the stones in order to forget for a while the endless priapic skyscraper erections which saturate their choking city culture.

This kind of ancient temple, which fits into the landscape almost unnoticed, is by definition a female building, and examples abound throughout the British Isles. They were most likely inspired by cave dwellings, or rock shelters known as abris, these being the most natural metaphor for the Great Mother. The long and round barrows earlier described were sometimes built upon the sites of far older ritual centres. Avebury itself began as a series of deep ritual pits in which offerings were made to the Mother Earth, and these pits remained in use until long after Silbury was built. There is still the possibility that Silbury herself was constructed above some as yet undiscovered natural cave.

But surely the most compelling 'cave' discovery of all came from Grimes Graves[G] in East Anglia, the largest Neolithic flint-mine in all of ancient England's chalk country. Here, amongst wide mine shafts thirty feet deep, a shaft had failed to yield good flints. In a ritual designed to appease the Great Mother and ensure rich diggings in all future shafts, the Neolithic miners had built an altar of flints within the failed shaft.

Carefully placed pickaxes made of red deer antlers were heaped around the flint altar and a chalk lamp was placed at its foot. Finally, set in front of this great altar were chalk carvings of a pregnant woman, a phallus and chalk balls.[1] Here the male and female are linked – the connection between birth and the sex act has finally been made. But for thousands of years before this discovery, birth was an exclusive symbol of the Great Mother and these ancient times belonged to women. Modern Humanity has come to think of time as linear and to believe that progress renders obsolete all that went before it, but this is a very recent and blinkered world view, fuelled by Christianity and driven by heavy industry.[2] The Great Mother religions, which had orchestrated the previous 30,000 years of the Old and Middle Stone Age eras so successfully, saw no division between the past and the future, or between life and death, because the Goddess was all of these things. Unaware of the male role within the life cycle, all revolved around Parthenogenesis, or self-generation – and it was this self-contained, self-generating Goddess from whose belly alone life could flow. Indeed, she was Creator and Sustainer of all Life as well as Wielder of Death.

And with the coming of agriculture in the Neolithic, the endless Circle of Life was reinforced in the minds of the people by the birth and death images perpetually revealed in Nature and the cosmos. Here was the Great Mother as Regeneratrix, bringing nourishment and renewal to the world. The longbarrows became involved in birth and rebirth, and great chambers of stone and timber[3] were created, generally at the east end of these extensive mounds. Here generations of the Cunning and Wise were returned to the Great Mother in a symbolic ritual which, during burial and reburial, always involved the destruction and reconstruction of the front forecourt of the great temple.

This was symbolic of the vagina's destruction in childbirth, which so hypnotised and moved the Ancients – for them, the childbirth tearing of the vagina was a rite-of-passage central to a woman's elevation into Motherhood. Of course, the vagina heals and once more becomes a sexual force, but the constant opening and reopening of the great stones echoed the gravity with which the Ancients considered the situation. And in returning the dead to a foetal position, in the womb-like megalithic chambers, so the soul was prepared for its journey of rebirth.

The Severn–Cotswold monuments, as they are known archaeologically, clearly operated around a highly evolved sacred template representing the recumbent pregnant Mother in childbirth, her open legs stylistically truncated. Here, the megalithic chambers are representative of the womb itself. Within the low dark portals of the finely finished South Walean temples at Tinkinswood[G] and Parc Le Breos,[G] the central chambers accommodated the primary burials. But at other similar longbarrows[4] the real burials have been relegated to cells along the barrow sides, whilst the building and rebuilding have become the entire focal point of the longbarrow's role, and a false wall has been created to facilitate these stylised rituals.

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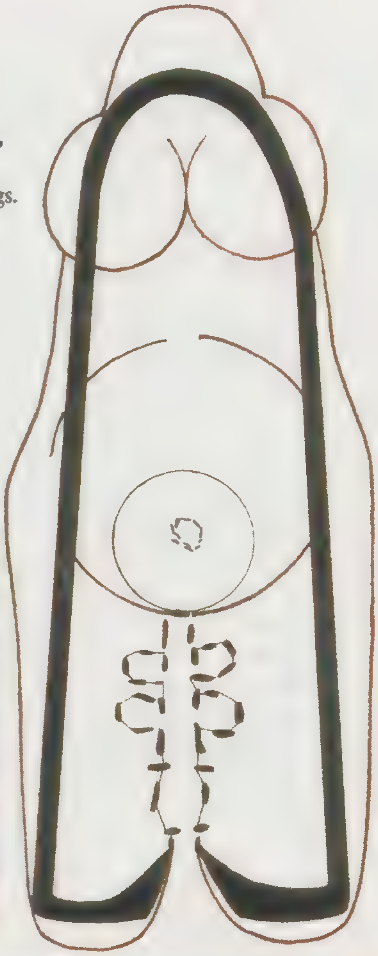
[1] Nicholas Thomas, *Prehistoric England*

[2] In Dr Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*, we learn that: '...Christianity itself was an important prerequisite to the development of evolutionary ideas. The pivotal idea that time was *linear*. Unlike most religions, which perceive time as cyclical and repetitive, Christian time has a beginning, a middle and, presumably, an end. Jesus Christ, be he historical figure or the Son of God, came once, lived and died. In short, Christian, and now Western, time is directional; history progresses and does not recur in eternal repetitions: genuinely new discoveries are made; the world changes.'

[3] Examples are Fussell's Lodge near Old Sarum and Wayland's Smithy Phase 1 at 2. c) 16

[4] Examples are Belas Knap at 2. c) 2 and Lugbury in Wiltshire at O.S. 173.831786. The latter has been reduced to its false wall and supporting uprights, creating a monument akin to a later period Aberdeenshire Recumbent and flankers.

LEFT: This Goddess figurine was discovered in Grimes Graves, Norfolk, in 1929. © The British Museum.
BOTTOM: Belas Knap longbarrow, in Wiltshire, as the recumbent Goddess, with stylised truncated legs. © English Heritage/Skyscan Balloon Photography.
RIGHT: Ground plan of Severn-Cotswold longbarrow as recumbent Goddess, with burial chambers as analogues of the Mother's womb.
BELOW: Belas Knap false wall as vagina entrance.



This symbolic image of the Great Mother as cave continued deep into historic times at the Land's End, with the continued use of constructed megalithic long caves called fogous (pronounced 'fuh-goos'). These vestiges of Goddess worship were built in the late Cornish Iron Age,[5] and continued to be utilised into the Christian period. There was always a disorientating and particularly cramped final chamber, known as a 'creep', built into the fogou – a womb symbolism which reeks of a need for communion with the Great Goddess even at this apparently late stage. Other similar structures called souterrains are found in parts of Scotland and Ireland, but they had no creep, and evidence of petrified grains on some of their floors suggests that they may have begun as storage places. One especially cramped linear souterrain at Cnoc Ullinish, on the Isle of Skye, could only have worked as a ritual place of dreams, for it is just a narrow damp cave and unbearably claustrophobic.

The Mother cave of the Old Stone Age

But the original idea of the cave as a Great Mother image reaches far back into the Old Stone Age, or Palaeolithic, when any cave designated for use as a burial centre would be painted with red ochre representing the pregnant womb and the symbolic blood of rebirth.[6] And were we now to look back 25,000 years before Avebury to those red-painted caves of the Old Stone Age, such as the Abri Blanchard and Abri Castanet in France, we should there see the earliest renderings of Humanity's major deity sculpted in clay, carved in stone, or painted on rocks throughout this considerably earlier ancient culture. But wherever they appear, these Palaeolithic images of the deity all signify the human female: symbols of breasts, vulvas, pubic triangles, zigzags of the snake-goddess and cup-marks of the Great Mother.[7] Modern Humanity has looked the same since the Cro-Magnons first emerged around 50,000 years ago. Scientists love to say that if they could shave the face of a male Cro-Magnon and dress him in a suit, except for his shambling gait, he could walk unrecognised through the City of London. But this charming reductionist view still perpetuates the image of a 'hairy' beast waiting to be civilised. By damning these earliest Cro-Magnons with faint praise, the apparently big-hearted scientists unconsciously re-create a scene not far removed from the 19th century, when black African tribesmen uncomfortably outfitted in suits and shoes were presented to the West by returning anthropologists in a misguided attempt to show that they were 'as good as us', a patronising view that even the anthropologist himself was unlikely to have truly believed. Indeed, when Mr Darwin himself visited the natives of Tierra del Fuego, he was so horrified that he drew them as inhuman caricatures and promptly published a pamphlet recommending the stout work of the Christian missionaries.

The hearth of civilisation

So, at the dawning of Humanity as we know it, God was a woman. And the dawn of civilisation sprang from that most domestic of all scenes – the hearth. And though few of we Moderns have a central fireplace, we still talk of 'sitting around the fire', an unconscious tribal memory of a time when the campfire was the hub of the entire community, and to be excluded meant more than just a social *faux pas* – it meant cold, hunger and isolation. The fire, then, became not just the symbolic centre of tribal life, but the axis around which all daily business was conducted.[8] That the community had the power to refuse access to the fire ensured harmony and a willingness for each one to do their daily task. And those at the heart of the gathering and closest to the fire were the women and the children. Here, over the millennia, out of the babble and the gestures and the direct eye contact between the women and their babies, slowly language evolved.

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[5] Examples of fogous are at Boleigh at 1. a) 1 and Pendeen Vau at 1. a) 13

[6] Monica Sjöö & Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother*

[7] Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*

[8] John Michell, *At the Centre of the World*

The men were the hunters – clear understandable gestures were vital to the hunt, but hours spent in silence with all concentration engaged on the kill ensured that they could contribute little to this fundamentally subtle era at the birth of civilisation. Cast adrift from the still-unknown father role that Modern men take for granted, Palaeolithic men were forced to content themselves with simple nanny jobs in imitation of the Mother.

And, as is the way of non-technological societies, it was always the women who were called upon to attend to illness and to heal. This caused the women to search for and experiment with medicinal plants which in turn made greater healers of them. Over the millennia, as the women experimented further and further with herbs and flowers, they became colossal repositories of earth knowledge and the men, unaware of their role in the birth cycle, became ever more excluded.

Agriculture's first appearance in the Middle East around 10,000 years ago was the rarest combination of threefold serendipity. Wheat was just another type of wild grass until its accidental crossing with a natural goat grass at the end of the last Ice Age. This produced emmer, a plump, strong plant with twice as many chromosomes as either of its parents. This easily dispersed new form then miraculously mixed with yet another natural goat grass to produce the crop which we now know as bread wheat. Strangest of all, the bread wheat was a Frankenstein, producing a sticky head so plump and tight that, unlike a natural wild grass, it required Humanity to scatter it and help it propagate – a truly symbiotic relationship.[9]

But the coming of agricultural civilisation naturally placed the power even further into the hands of the women, pushing the hunting men into a state of further dependency, and it would only be Neolithic Humanity's discovery of the male role in childbirth which prevented men from slipping into a dangerous and untenable position in the community. Pottery was a female invention,[10] as was the development of the corded patterns which were found over many of the pots.[11] Controlling the food sources caused the need for permanent storage and the women domesticated the cat in order to protect their granaries from rodents.[12] The fire which burned at the hearth – the centre of women's world – was constantly attended and included in daily experiment. As well as boiling, roasting, steaming and baking, control over directed heat allowed the drying and preserving of fruit and plants.[13]

Not until the coming of cattle breeding and the slow rise of the institution of Fatherhood would men graduate beyond their supportive role. On the great sarcophagus of Haghia Triada (or the Three Hags) in ancient Crete, the men are shown only as porters and musicians, the sacrifice and ceremony performed entirely by the women.[14]

The Triple Goddess in the British Landscape

The Ancients divided the age of woman into three clear stages: the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone. These distinctions manifested in the religion of the Great Mother under the term 'the Triple Goddess', and she came to be worshipped in all of these different aspects. Nowadays the names Virgin, Mother and Hag are sometimes substituted, but the intention remains the same. The Triple Goddess also symbolised birth, death and rebirth, the earliest Holy Trinity,[15] whilst the moon contained all aspects of the Triple Goddess, passing from one phase to the next – the new or waxing moon as the White Goddess of birth and growth, the full moon as the Red Goddess of love, and the old or waning moon as the Black Goddess of death and divination.[16]

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[9] Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man*

[10] Monica Sjöö & Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother*

[11] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

[12] Evelyn Reed, *The Myth of Women's Inferiority*. N.B. Vestiges of this domestication are seen with the supposed psychic link between the woman and the cat, her 'familiar'. In the witch-burning times, all cats were thrown on the bonfire along with the 'witches'.

[13] Even in historic times, fire has been in the trust of women: the Vestal Virgins of ancient Rome and the Irish nuns of St. Bridgit are two examples.

[14] Dr R. Briffault, *The Mothers*

[15] Adam McLean, *The Triple Goddess*

[16] Merlin Stone, *When God Was a Woman*

Countless manifestations of the Triple Goddess remain within the British landscape, her names still intact and unchanged by the four successive waves of historical invaders (Roman–Saxon–Viking–Norman) who have followed the prehistoric Kelts[17] into Britain over the past 2,000 years. In Chapters 4 and 5, we will see specific detailed examples of the way in which modern Britain reveals the sacred Goddess landscape. But let us here take a quick preliminary look at the names of the hills and valleys and other topographical features which reflect worship of the Great Mother, for many of these names forged in the Neolithic or the later Keltic Bronze Age still evoke a world made Goddess-shaped by her believers.

Because of the savage destruction meted out to the megalithic sites over these past centuries, few monumental depictions of the complete Triple Goddess still exist. In *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves writes:

> *'The three standing stones thrown down from Moelfre Hill near Dwyg-y-Fylchi in Wales may well have represented the … trinity. One was white, one red, one dark blue, and they were known as the Three Women. The local monkish legend was that the women dressed in those colours were petrified as a punishment for winnowing corn on a Sunday.'*

Clearly, the three stones must have caused great offence to the 17th-century clergy, for Moelfre Hill[18] is a long sustained climb and still thronged with stone circles and standing stones. This suggests that the clergy specifically chose the Three Women as objects of their disgust, for their destruction would have involved great effort. Fortunately, there remains a superb example of the complete Triple Goddess at the Hebridean stone circle Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag (pronounced 'Krawk Filliveer Veg')[G] near Callanish[G] on the Isle of Lewis. Here, within the circle itself, stands a remarkable setting of three stones of Lewissian gneiss, a crystalline rock which sparkles in the sun. The Goddess stones are perfectly balanced to fit each phase of woman, and the scene is one of cosmic proportion. At the centre stands the Mother stone, glittering red and top-heavy. At her left stands the diminutive stone of the Maiden, all white to symbolise growth and the Virgin. Completing the trinity at the right of the Mother is the darkest, tallest stone of the Goddess in her most wise form, the elder of the community – the Crone. Almost as remarkable is the six-feet-tall phallus stone which stands directly opposite the Triple Goddess stones as though addressing them. For this huge blue-black upright has a curious froth of white quartz at its head, giving the impression of semen cascading out of the glans. This is the Consort, the representation of the male in his pre-god form.[19]

And we may remain at Callanish in order to see a vivid landscape Goddess, for here the stone circles are all orientated towards a phenomenon called Cailleach na Mointeach, or 'the Old Woman of the Moors' – the Great Mother as Hag. Several hills and valleys line up to create the illusion of a woman lying on her back, with feet, knees, breasts, lips and a nose. She is the most remarkable example of a landscape Goddess in all of the British Isles, and her memory is enshrined in local oral tradition.[20] In Aberdeenshire, two ruined stone circles[21] stand in the lea of Wheedlemont Hill, an archaic name for a legendary hill surmounted by an ancient earthwork. Cnoc Cailliche is the Gaelic name of this 'Hill of the Hag'. Far south in Wessex, there's a Hag Hill on the Michael Line,[22] one mile south of Semington, whilst the most famous of all the hag hills is the Irish Sliab na Caillighe, or 'Mountain of the Hag', at Loughcrew, north-west of Dublin. Here, a feast of carved stones litter the chambers of these hillside cairns where the Ancients practised their astronomy from the very top of the world.

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[17] I have opted to use this alternative spelling of Kelt for several reasons, but mainly because the word evokes so many different images to different people. By spelling Kelt with a 'k', I am actually inferring 'so-called Kelt'. To the archaeologists, the Celts arrived around 350 BCE, whilst to New Agers those Bronze Age patterns are the height of Celtic culture, though they really originated from around 1200 BCE. Certain modern scholars have even argued that the Kelts never settled in Britain. With so many truths from which to choose, I opted for a poetic solution; this 'variant of Celt', offered by the *Collins English Dictionary*.

[18] Best approached from behind the town of Penmaenmawr, Moelfre Hill remains the home of the Druid's Circle and the Meini Hirion at 5. b) 3

[19] Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag is a perfect example of a megalithic site constructed when God was a still a woman and the male, as Consort, assumed a deferential role. By the Iron Age, the consort would evolve into gods such as Cernunnus and Herne the Hunter, and the shift of balance would have begun. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 10.

[20] Margaret & G. Ron Curtis, personal communication

[21] The stone circles are Templand and Wheedlemont (see Chapter 8: 'Fifty-Nine Stone Circles in Aberdeenshire')

Mam Tor[G] is the greatest sacred hill in Derbyshire, and Mam means 'Mother' in all the Keltic languages. From this root we also find 'mammaries', and Mam Tor is shaped like a great conical breast. In Aberdeenshire, the two huge sacred mountains around whom most of the area's stone circles are sighted/sited are called Mither Tap and Tap O'Noth, literally 'the Mother Tit' and 'the Northern Tit'.[23]

Finally, the Goddess as Maiden is hugely revealed at Maiden Castle in Dorset,[G] a grand longbarrow-shaped hill used for ritual and habitation from time immemorial, whilst the now destroyed Maiden's Grave on the Yorkshire Wolds stood on the river known as the Gypsey Race,[G] between the legendary Neolithic mound Willy Howe and the Rudston Monolith, the largest standing stone in Great Britain.[G] All of the Cornish stone circles are still known collectively as Nine Maidens, whatever their individual local names may be. These Nine Maidens are all aspects of the Triple Goddess, each worshipped as the Maiden, the Mother and the Hag, creating nine separate Goddesses.

It is the Goddess Bridgit who was probably most central to ancient British prehistory. These Pretanic Isles, as the ancient Greeks referred to Britain, were also apparently known as Prydain by the so-called Brythonic Kelts. And even after the Roman invasion, this glorious Bridgit landscape was still inspiring the northern Brigantes tribe to pursue Goddess worship and a matrilinear queenship which passed from Mother to Daughter. At the north of their territory stood the now battered Bridestones[G] whilst the Gypsey Race flowed into the North Sea at Bridlington, still known locally as 'Brid'.

And probably the most ancient home of Bridgit was at Abbotsbury in Dorset. Here, close to the mouths of the two Goddess rivers Brit and Bride, stands the legendary, and purportedly unique, Abbotsbury Swannery. That the conical hills of Bridport stand pert and proud serves only to reinforce that here, as the Swan Goddess, Bridgit revealed the fundamental beginnings of legendary Britain.[24]

Avebury – Goddess worship at its pinnacle

And so we return to the symbolic centre: the Marlborough Downs. For however great our travels have been, only on the Downs was everything truly reconciled. Here, within the rising fertile chalkland, lay the great nodules of flint – the jewels, the tools and the very essence of the Neolithic culture on which the Ancients relied and were often forced to travel long distances to obtain. For agriculture without flint was impossible. From the north, the oldest road in Europe, the Ridgeway, has carried people along its back for a claimed 7,000 years, suggesting that the sacred destination of the main Stone Age highway was long ago understood.

Had the Ancients arrived from Ireland, then they could have travelled to Avebury from the Bath area, via Bowden Hill and Corsham, and from Bristol through the river crossing at Ford and past the Severn–Cotswold longbarrow called Hubbeslow.[25]

From the south, travelling along the trackway from the Avon at Marden henge, the sense of the Ancients' bubbling delight can only be imagined

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[22] **The Michael Line: This contentious phenomenon was discovered by the mystic John Michell. Ley hunters claimed it as their own, only later to disown it as inaccurate. In actuality, it is a remarkably straight line across the south of England taking in extraordinary sacred sites: Avebury, Glastonbury, and so forth. As one who finds ley lines wearisome and endless, the Michael Line does resound with remarkable poetic truth around my neck of the woods, that is, the Marlborough Downs. Travelling WSW across the Downs, the line passes through Ogbourne St. George church on the site of a ruined temple, Avebury at its southern entrance, Folly Hill right through the roundbarrow, through Three Barrows Down, the barrows of which are all aligned Michaelwards, and finally to Oliver's Camp, through one final barrow. Best of all, the Michael Line manifests itself with one big flowing and jutting breast of land, protruding hard out into the landscape under Oliver's Camp and spectacularly visible to the left, when approaching Devizes from Chippenham, before Rowde.**

[23] **See Chapter 8: 'Fifty-Nine Stone Circles in Aberdeenshire'.**

[24] **Bridport, Abbotsbury & the Swannery are found at 2. b) 2**

[25] **Hubbeslow is found west of Chippenham in Wiltshire at O.S. 173-877747**

as they mounted the southern escarpment between the breast-shaped land-piers later to be named Milk Hill and Rybury. And coming across the Vale of Pewsey from Dorset via Salisbury Plain, the southern route of the Ridgeway rose up between the twin citadels of Knap Hill[G] and Adam's Grave,[G] the traveller ascending through the deep cleft of the Mother, instinctively grabbing a handful of the startling flints that lay scattered around the land like spilled Aztec jewels. Time disappears on the Marlborough Downs. For however ancient these travellers appear to us, the sacredness of these Downs ensures that there were always those who had gone before.

Kennet before Avebury – centre of a Stone Age world

Like the ancient Tynwald Hill at the centre of the Isle of Man,[G] or the inaccessible Ulan Bator, legendary sacred heart of landlocked Outer Mongolia, Kennet was a planned ceremonial centre. And as we have already seen, it was conceived as the sacred omphalos or Navel of the Neolithic world, with all the attendant weight of responsibility which that role implies. But unlike the two examples named above, which had both involved considerable planning and exhaustive clearance of vegetation, Kennet was primarily in all aspects a natural temple and a natural omphalos; indeed, its position positively led people to it, down the dorsal spines and hogsbacks of southern central Britain.

And Kennet was the first, the natural, the most real outpouring of She whom the Stone Age people worshipped. Modern explorers have found hoards of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic tools upon the Marlborough Downs,[26] revealing that the sacredness of this landscape reaches far back into remote antiquity. But unlike all later created sacred centres, Kennet was the natural archetype which would define future generations of worship. Here at the sacred centre, the Great Mother revealed herself as a pragmatic and helpful Divinity, guiding everyone naturally and poetically to the Marlborough Downs. In the minds of the Ancients the practical aspects were paramount: had Kennet been in any way difficult to reach, its reputation would never have taken a hold, for we are talking of a time before the temple builders when Mesolithic hunters and scouts did travel distances, but families had to be confident of a safe bet. And the dreadful, laboursome task which thousands of years later created Ulan Bator would have filled the Ancients with dread and distrust. For the undertaking would have been perceived as so unrighteous and destructive that the people would never have come. But come to Kennet they did – across the millennia by boat and on foot, again and again they came.

Waden Hill at the rising of the Kennet

Waden Hill stands at the beginning of all things, for it is the great natural long-barrow hill at the rising of the Kennet – the Mother of all rivers. Waden Hill was the first hill above all others, the Great Mother analogue which would in the distant future inspire long-barrows all over the Downs.

We may never discover the first name of this half-mile-long divine eminence, for the arriving Saxons changed it to Waden Hill 1,500 years ago. However, in doing so they revealed that even as late as the 6th century after Christ, the hill was still an Absolute in the hearts of the population and deemed a place of the Creator. For Waden is Woden, and Wotan, and Odin. He is Wade the Giant. He is the King of all the Norse gods, father of all other gods and Creator of Humans, known as the Oldfather in his guise as Odin.[27] We see clearly here at Waden Hill the myth of the patriarch replacing the matriarch. By the time of the Saxons' arrival, Silbury and the great Avebury henge had been in place for thousands of years, yet neither of these fantastical creations became known as Wadensbury. Only the first natural

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[26] L F. Smith, ***Windmill Hill and Avebury***

[27] Evans & Millard, ***Legends***

Mother hill at the source of the Kennet merited this Creator name, which suggests that the Wessex Saxons, who had first arrived in the area as paid mercenaries and guests of the Brythonic tribes, had had plenty of time to soak up the obviously vast corpus of oral tradition about the hill. Presently male but formerly female, Waden Hill stands at the beginning of all things.

Swallowhead to the Mother's Jam at Fyfield

At Swallowhead Spring at a sharp bend, sacred water disgorges itself into the Winterbourne stream, and the river passes east at the foot of Waden Hill, as the river Kennet. For 50,000 years,[28] Humanity walked the Marlborough Downs, searching its every locker and cupboard, and discovering that here, more than anywhere else, at the rising of the Kennet was a sacredness of true harmonic peace. There were many other sacred universal landscapes that spoke to every Stone Age pilgrim who visited them, but none was so central as the Marlborough Downs, nor so nourishing merely to walk upon. As the hunters and gatherers strode across the Downs, they felt their Great Mother more vibrantly here at Kennet than anywhere else on this divine plateau. For it was here that great stones lay defiantly *upon* the land.[29]

Elsewhere in the seaboard cultures of the European Stone Age, the Wise had made their divinations at water courses, magic trees and, most especially, at great rocks. But two miles east upon Fyfield Down there was a stone for everyone, and these great megalithic jewels were piled upon each other; gigantic remnants of the last Ice Age. This was the Mother's Jam,[G] the natural temple of oracle stones which for thousands of years spoke to their various families or communities. So magical were these great stones to the Stone Age peoples that the coming of the monument builders saw the plucking of these jewels from their places of origin and then their transporting and erecting as part of the new Avebury ring. Even the soil of the Downs was suffused with an outrageous fertility, divinely rich as the menstrual blood of the Mother Earth, and full of similarly divine flints. Human-shaped, dolphin-shaped, phallus-shaped; claws, tempting the nomads' fingers to search out on all fours; anthropomorphic and goddess-like, archetypal UFOs, here on the Marlborough Downs – up here they saw the centre of everything.

In its quiet plateau-on-the-edge-of-time manner this divine landscape ultimately eclipsed even more extreme visual displays of earth magic, such as the Burren south of Galway in the far west of Ireland, where mile upon lilac mile of effervescent stone is dusted with the talcum of the gods, but raised up and inaccessible.

On the Orkney Mainland was a sacred isthmus of land called the Ness of Brogar, so specifically renowned for its great Mother magic that by the Neolithic there would be monuments all across its length and breadth.

For this seaboard culture had brought the farmers, the great magicians, the controllers, the agriculturists who, by the very specifics of their new sedentary lifestyle, required an entirely different relationship with the Great Mother and an utter devotion to the heavens. And in the Highlands of Scotland, the night sky was ablaze with meaning. Whilst the moon danced low across the southern horizon, the wheel of the year was forged in the endless repeated sweeps which the sun makes across the sky. In all these things they saw meaning and usefulness which would entirely change their quality of life.

At the Ness of Brogar, two great earth rings planted with standing stones were now linked by an avenue of more stones across the narrow isthmus. Like two crowns joined by a garland of flowers at a Greek Orthodox wedding, the Brogar monuments so resounded within the new temple-building

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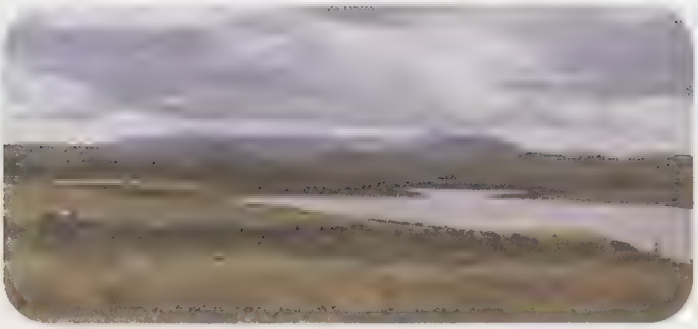
28 Kenneth Watts, *The Marlborough Downs*

29 There is a general myth amongst archaeologists that sarsens are only found upon the Mother's Jam down towards the Devil's Den, Piggledene and Lockeridge Dene. This is clearly a falsehood, as local people continually testify. As I write this now from my home in Yatesbury (20/4/97 CE), I know that large sarsens have been dug out of our garden in the last 20 years, and small ones within the last 15 months, and we are a mile west of Windmill Hill. My friend Roger Onslow of Calne knows of sarsens being extracted from prospective basements as far west as Studley, beyond Calne!



LEFT: At Callanish, all the stone circles are orientated to a landscape phenomenon known as 'the Old Woman of the Moors' or 'Sleeping Beauty'.

BELOW: The Mother's Jam provided building stone for all the Neolithic temples in the area. Its magic became so famous that the chieftains of Salisbury Plain dragged enough stones twenty miles south in order to create the trilithons of Stonehenge.

INSET: A walk on the Marlborough Downs reveals flints undreamed of anthropomorphic shapes.
ABOVE: At the far west of Ireland, the magical rock of the Burren dwarfs even Poulnabrone dolmen, its most famous resident.

Humanity that they very likely inspired the final stage of the Sanctuary at Avebury.[30]

But as great as these Irish and Orcadian landscapes were, their geography was too obscure and removed from the rest of the ancient world to enjoy the same universal nature of Kennet, where the untouched landscape was a giantess's counterpane and the flint cores, the currency of the megalithic cultures, lay around with oozing exhibitionist excess.

The stations of the Gypsey Race

Only in rare places did the Great Mother yield up her flints to Humanity, and the Ancients combed the land for these sacred provider hot spots. Along the banks of the Medway at Little Kit's Coty[G] and Coldrum,[G] great Neolithic monuments celebrated the divine presence of the milky flint. This continued through Keltic times and is still revealed at Coldrum longbarrow, its name a mutation of 'Galdrum' – literally a place of 'Inchantments', as William Borlase's *Cornish–English Vocabulary* of 1754 would have it.

And far away up on the Wolds of North Yorkshire, in a similarly gentle outpouring of the Goddess's landscape form, flints had also been discovered in the same engulfing proportions, turning the whole area into a giant sacred landscape of the Great Mother at her most defined. And like the Marlborough Downs, the Yorkshire Wolds had fascinated the Ancients since Mesolithic residents of the low-lying lands known as the Carrs to the immediate north had begun to explore this enigmatic and fertile high ground.

Standing at the most famous British Mesolithic site, Starr Carr, the Wolds presented exciting possibilities. And a few miles south in a wide open valley, a crossroads of four pathways grew up at the rising of the Gypsey Race,[G] the river so inspiring and central to its sacred area.

Like the Kennet, the Gypsey Race passed through a gentle, ultra-fertile landscape imbued with all the sacred code-signs which the Ancients researched. To this parallel natural universe on the Wolds, Neolithic temple-building people came. They built great sacred mounds along the banks of the Gypsey Race, and they accentuated the landscape with ritual pathways pointing towards one natural mound and erecting a twenty-five-foot pillar on its summit. The largest pathway, or cursus, was 100 yards across and two-and-a-half miles long, the others all over a mile long and of the same width.

The Separation caused by the arrival of agriculture revealed itself as the Ancients began to celebrate the landscape with the building of these temples. Back on the Marlborough Downs, one of the most important longbarrows was built on a summit at West Kennett, close to the start of the river, as though echoing the slumbering Waden Hill. This earth longbarrow was a huge construction built all along the crest of the hill. Enormous flat-bottomed ditches were dug to provide material for the barrow itself and a low-lying observatory of the heavens was created by which to observe the rising of the stars.[31]

For countless millennia before the temple builders had arrived, the natural sanctity of the Marlborough Downs had been intuited by the travelling tribes who had then alerted others. But the coming of the megalithic cultures defined and punctuated Kennet's unique situation, and with the opening up of the forests through stone axes and flint tools, slowly new pathways of communication were created and gradually Kennet's influence began to grow.

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[30] Brogar and Stenness are at 7. c) 8

[31] John North, *Stonehenge: Neolithic Man & the Cosmos*

Origins & birth in the names of the Kennet

In all the names of all the sacred places upon the Marlborough Downs, it is a remarkable poetic justice that the first river rising has retained such an ancient name. And it is something to scream about that the rivers of Britain were never renamed by the Romans, Saxons, Danish or Normans. For it is not impossible that a variant of Kennet was the river's first name, as the roots of that name appear so often in the Keltic languages as to have been a part of their very fabric. In the Welsh, Cornish and Breton languages, the roots of Kennet all allude to those most fundamental symbols – origins, birth and the female.

In Welsh, *cenedl* (pronounced 'kenneddle') means 'nation' or 'race'. Kennet is echoed in the great Cornish Mother mountain at the Land's End known as Kenidjack, and a female cousin in the old Breton is a *keniterf*.[32] The relationship of the Keltic languages with Latin and Greek is revealed at Cunetio, which the Romans built on the banks of the Kennet at Mildenhall, near Marlborough. The root of the Roman *cunet* in Cunetio is the same root which describes the sex act of 'cunnilingus' and this is also the origin of the once sacred but now profane 'cunt'. Indeed, the river Kennet was known as the Cunnit as recently as the 1700s, according to William Stukeley's *Abury* of 1743. 'Cunning' was never so demonised a word that it could not be uttered, yet because its root is the same as 'cunt' is now marginalised; a word with a shadowy side, rather than the symbol of deep healing and divination that the term 'cunning woman' once signified. The transmuting nature of the Keltic languages means that the 'c' becomes a 'g' in the Welsh word for 'native', hence *gened-igol*.[33] Finally, transmutations again utilise the 'g' in the Keltic for birth: *gened-igaeth* in Welsh and *gened-igveth* in Cornish.[34] Here Kennet appears as *gened*, revealing its direct root to origins, birth and the female via 'genetics'.

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[32] D. W. F. Hardie, *A Handbook of Modern Breton* (1946)

[33] Christopher Davies, *Y Geiriadur Mawr* (Welsh Dictionary, 1958)

[34] William Borlase, *A Cornish–English Vocabulary* (1754)

CHAPTER

four

The Bridgit Landscapes

' … it was the fire goddess, Brigit, queen of the Sun's cardinal movements, at once so powerful, yet so measured, the bringer of fire, yet the protectress from conflagration, who carried her far-flung riches back into the house, like a harvest home, and distributed them among the family… It is no co-incidence that Brigit, the deity most obviously esteemed with the sacred flame, has lasted the longest.'

MICHAEL DAMES, *MYTHIC IRELAND*

'Brigit, excellent woman, a flame, golden, delightful. May she, the sun-dazzling, splendid, guide us to the eternal Kingdom.'

ST. BROCCAN, 7TH CENTURY

'Paying homage to Bride, the presentation of gifts, making dolls, baking of special cakes, welcoming of the Saint in each house, and expectation of her visit as a blessing must have roots deeper than the last centuries of paganism; much of it carries on Neolithic traditions.'

MARIJA GIMBUTAS, *THE LANGUAGE OF THE GODDESS*

'In Gaelic Scotland her symbol was the White Swan, and she was known as the Bride of the Golden Hair, Bride of the White Hills, mother of the King of Glory. In the Hebrides she was the patroness of childbirth. Her Aegean prototype seems to have been Brizo of Delos, a moon-goddess to whom votive ships were offered, and whose name was derived by the Greeks from the word *brizein*, "to enchant".'

ROBERT GRAVES, *THE WHITE GODDESS*

Home & the Fire Goddess

As Humanity moved further into its new agricultural life, everywhere it saw the Great Mother. The setting down of permanent roots had caused the Neolithics to pay an even closer attention to the land, and hunting parties returning every night to the same camp began to make associations with certain stars and planets, enabling the men to return home more easily. Humanity delighted in this new freedom and, from these experiences, gradually a whole new domestic psyche would emerge.

The nomadic peoples of the Old and Middle Stone Ages had been caught in a stasis – an endless repeated cycle of daily travel which had so involved their waking hours that there was no time for the contemplation which we Moderns have learned to take for granted in village and city life. Nomads' dreams never extended beyond the achievements of their parents. They travelled with what they could carry and no more, for nomads had no use for objects with only seasonal value which would have been merely an encumbrance the rest of the time. But now, overlaid upon Humanity's recent nomadic past and dreams of the Great Wandering, the Mother Hearth at the centre of the new Home began to emerge as the focal point of worship.[1]

This rejection of old itinerant values freed people, both physically and psychologically, and, at the great fireplace which warmed them and fed them, the Neolithic agriculturists stood at the physical and symbolic centre of everyday life. The fire which had so served Humanity at its nomad stage now took on far deeper significance to these new agriculturists. In setting down roots, they embraced all that was significant to them from their Old Ways and, at the hearth, it was the Fire Goddess who emerged from the distant past to light the future way ahead. It was upon her fundament that great myths would be built, growing like a giant beanstalk or World Tree, the backbone on which all of civilisation would be hung. And over the passing millennia, even as her past became obscured, never did the Fire Goddess fall out of favour, for the fire would always be central to civilisation.

Bridgit-on-the-Hearth

In Britain, a major Fire Goddess was Bridgit and, as the Keeper of the Flame, she gradually came to be a main focus of our worship. We have already seen Bridgit in her guises as Triple Goddess and Swan Goddess, but it was as Fire Goddess that she began her slow ascent into the hearts of the British tribes. There were many local Goddesses but Bridgit was everywhere. Her work with fire was both practical and inspirational, and the mythographic mindset of the Ancients soon poetically linked her fire with other characteristics of light, heat, burning, and so on. By the Bronze Age, shining her light of vision, she became the Bridgit of Poetry. Using her heat to dry out sacred herbs she was the Bridgit of Healing; thrusting the bronze into her furnace, Bridgit became Goddess of Smithcraft. And as all three, she was a poetic triad and a metaphor for excellence.[2]

The rise of the rooted community created Bridgit-on-the-Hearth, an all-seeing, all-providing version of the Fire Goddess so central to household events that she graduated from the fireplace to represent the entire kitchen as the caring, universal Mother. In her Irish guise as Brid (pronounced 'Breed'), she was a Fertility Goddess and spiritual midwife. Her fertility rites spread to encompass the harvest, and Bridgit crosses made of wheat, straw or rushes were hung in the kitchen.

Bridgit's great festival was Imbolg, 1st February. Later Christianised into Candlemas, this Festival of Light welcomed the first rumbling of spring and the quickening of the year, where Bridgit was worshipped as the Triple Muse Goddess.

Clearly, Bridgit's staggering ability to span the millennia is because of her eternal significance. Michael Dames writes:

> *'The cross of Bride, as old as the Neolithic, still hangs in many a modern Irish kitchen, at least "for luck". Made either of rush or wheat-straw, these crosses combine harvest gold with Bridgit's yellow flame. Whether in lozenge shape, quartered wheel or free-legged, the dynamic of the solar year is conveyed.'*[3]

And even much later in historic times, when the Goddess would fall to the Christian God, still they could not cast out the Fire Goddess. Bridgit was too necessary to fall at the hands of the clergy. Instead, they canonised her, gradually Christianising her shrines and sites across the centuries. Robert Graves wrote: 'In medieval Irish poetry Mary was equally plainly identified with Brigit the Goddess of Poetry.'[4] That is quite a staggering thought. For if, at their most devout period in history, the Irish lauded Bridgit as they would have the Virgin Mary, it places Bridgit centrally as one of the most ancient British Goddesses of all.

With the rise of Christianity attempts were made to corral Bridgit and, under the dictum of Pope Gregory, a 'real' St. Bridgit was claimed. But the biography of the newly Christianised St. Bridgit revealed anything but the generic repetitious hagiography of most of the Keltic saints' lives.[5] At best, it was a sop to the newly baptised heathens by a sychophantic clergy desperate for a congregation, and Sir James Frazer called St. Bridgit 'an old heathen goddess of fertility, disguised in a threadbare Christian cloak'.[6] For St. Bridgit's biography 'revealed' that she was born at a Druid's house and was brought up by a wizard. She turned water into beer and was the foster mother of Christ. And even her birth was deeply symbolic, for she was born on the doorstep of the house just as her mother was entering it, thereby being both of the outdoors and of the indoors. Bridgit's birth was a metaphor symbolising the huge jump from the nomadic to the agricultural lifestyle. She spanned time, and she united the old ways with the new ways – for Bridgit was the Bridge.

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[1] Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man*

[2] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*

[3] Michael Dames, *Mythic Ireland*

[4] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*

This weight of different names by which Bridgit was formerly known is all because of the vast time scales over which she operated. In her oldest Stone Age form, Bridgit could not possibly have been her name, for her Neolithic contemporaries – whom we will later meet – all had simple one-syllable names, such as Ma, Hoeur, Koeur and so forth. The Neolithic Goddess Hoeur inspired many much later prehistoric deities such as Hera, Hermes, Horus, Hercules, Heraclitus, Hermaphroditus and Herne the Hunter. Similarly, the Neolithic Goddess Koeur begat such later deities as the Keltic Keridwen and Cernunnus, and the Roman Goddesses Ceres Legifera (the Lawgiver) and Carna, the Etruscan–Roman Mother of Festivals. Considering Bridgit in this same manner, and reviewing once more all of her known names – Bride, Brid, Brig, Brizo of Delos, the Manx Breeshey and the Cretan Britomartis – it is most likely that the Neolithic form of her name was simply Bree.

A Keltic language note

'The language of the Bruts (pronounced "Brits") is Cymraeg (pronounced "Cum-rig"), the people Y Cymry (pronounced "Ee Cumry"), derived from the Old British "Combrogi" – "fellow countrymen"; those whom the invading Saxons called "Welsh" or "foreigners".'

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE, PAUL DEVEREUX, PETER FOWLER & RHYS JONES, *WHO OWNS STONEHENGE?*

If you think you are loose, then this passage will be a swirling eye-opener, for the past century of Standardisation in writing has changed, possibly forever, our previous habits of millennia, namely Loose Vowel Movement. In the ancient world, the vowel meant almost nothing. The name of Jehovah stems from the Jews' reluctance to speak the name of their god Yahweh. Instead they whispered it, as it had been whispered to Moses on Mount Sinai, muting the vowels 'YhhWhh!', and encoded it on paper as the Tetragrammaton four-letter codeword 'YHWH' or 'YHVH', hence its eventual mutation into Jehovah. But had it mutated into Yeehawah, the essence of the word would have still remained. Our society worships the vowel as essential to meaning, but if I soddanlo stort wrotong lake thas, yay woll seen knigh whit Um Soyung. Or will you?

In any study of the Keltic languages, we must always remember that these people were an essentially mystical race, fearful of specifics in language and more interested in creating mood. The Roman historian Tacitus recorded that the Druids chose to maintain their spiritual power through an exclusive oral tradition and considered script to be 'unfit for the recording of wisdom'.[7] Indeed, they consigned their knowledge of Classical Greek to keeping their financial accounts. And whilst Sir Isaac Newton found Scholar's Latin sufficient for the recording of his Three Laws of Motion, he found the language of 'the Gael' too unspecific and 'of the earth' to do the same. The Keltic psyche had no time for such modern concepts, as shown by their proverb: 'Words are the sons of the earth and the daughters of the sky.'

Britain is essentially a Germano-Keltic country – beginning with Iberian tribes from the south and proto-Scandinavian tribes from the north, with a later and constant influx of Belgians, Saxons, Vikings and Normans. Over the centuries, this has caused all kinds of pronunciation problems, since the Kelts generally pronounce the 'u' as an 'i' or 'ee', hence the Keltic river Ddu is pronounced 'Dee'. There are six remaining British rivers called Dee, but only two of them retain their Keltic spellings – yet in the Isle of Man, where 10th-century Norsemen invaded a specifically Keltic island, the Manx sacred river Ddu was mispronounced by the invaders and so mutated to its 20th-century name, the Dhoo! Elsewhere on the island, standard Keltic words such as *kerry* and *gharraidh* (pronounced 'garry') have turned into brutal Norse mutations now spelled phonetically *kerroo* and *garroo*.

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[5] Janet & Stuart Farrar, *A Witches Bible Compleat*

[6] Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*

[7] Tacitus, *Annals*

Perhaps the best illustration of the ancient shifting of vowels is found in this passage from *Witches*, a 1962 study of the Great Mother religion by T. C. Lethbridge, Director of Excavations at Trinity College, Cambridge. Lethbridge muses on the origins of Sheila-na-gigs: 'It seems to me that gig is simply a form of *Gog*, of *og*, *ug* and perhaps *bog*.'

Calling the names of Bree, Brüd & Brittany

As we have seen, Bridgit's persistence has paid off. She still nourishes our lives here in Britain whether we are aware of it or not, appearing in the sacred British landscape and even in certain place-names. We saw earlier how, as the Swan Goddess of Britain, Bridgit manifests in Dorset at the Abbotsbury Swannery, at an ancient site with a possible pre-Neolithic provenance, situated within five miles of the two mouths of the rivers Bride and Brit. In West Wales, St. Bride's Bay is the great opening above Milford Haven docks. The great massif of rock called Breedon-on-the-Hill, north of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire, stands wild and proud of its flat surroundings. Quarrying at the site has vastly reduced Breedon in size, but its general shape, surmounted by an Iron Age hillfort, still utterly dominates the area. Elsewhere in the British landscape, Bridgit's different aspects were celebrated at monuments such as the Bridell stone in Dyfed and the Priddy or 'Briddy' henges.[8] Pridacombe, or 'Brid's Valley', is the downland directly east of the King Arthur's Hall complex on Bodmin Moor.[G] In the days before the rising of the sea, legend has it that the Hebrides were one long island called Eileann Bride – the Isle of Bridgit or Bride.[9] In the Hebrides, Bridget was also known as the more Scandinavian Brüd, though said with a Welsh eye, this pronunciation would still remain 'Brid'. This Scando-Keltic relationship is revealed again at Brüd's river Brue, which flows through sacred Glastonbury[G] close to Bride's Mound. Ronald Hutton writes that Glastonbury 'carefully nurtured its association with her, claiming to possess her relics in rivalry with Kildare'.[10] In Gaelic, Bridgit's mound or *brugh* mutates into *broga* or 'palace', as seen at the Ring of Brogar on Orkney. Even nowadays, Brogar is often spelled 'Brodgar', unconsciously echoing Bridgit.[11] She gave her name to Brigantia, where the Gypsey Race flows – and where vestiges of the Great Mother remained until after the coming of the Romans.

And so central was Bridgit to British tribal beliefs that in the 5th century after Jesus Christ, as the Saxon invasion advanced, fleeing Britons who chose to settle in Armorica renamed it Brittany.[12]

As 'Bretagne' to our 'Grande Bretagne', the Breton race memory still defers to its ancient Mother country of origin. The other Breton name for Brittany was Breiz (pronounced 'Breeze'), revealing the Cornish habit of substituting a 'd' for a 'z' as shown in Henry Rowlands' 1723 *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*.[13] In Breiz, there is an echo of Brizo of Delos, the Aegean Goddess quoted by Robert Graves at the beginning of this chapter. Bree, in her guise as Breiz or Brizo, has a dedication at the wonderful Brisworthy stone circle,[G] far into Dartmoor. Far up the river Severn, Breiz is further revealed in its Welsh form as the Breidden Hills (pronounced 'Breeth-en'). The substitution of the 'z' for the 'd' returns us to more familiar Bridgit territory. Here on the wide-open Severn flood-plain at her confluence with the river Vyrnwy, visible across the endless miles of border country, the three isolated and exhilarating Bridgit peaks of Breidden rear up eternal and magnificent.

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[8] The Priddy henges are in Somerset outside the Castle of Comfort crossroads, at O.S. 182.540527.

[9] Kathy Jones, *The Ancient British Goddess*

[10] Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun*

[11] The Ring of Brogar is at 7. c) 8

[12] D. W. F. Hardie, *A Handbook of Modern Breton*. Introduction, page 4: Hardie states that the north of Brittany was populated by Cambrian (early Welsh) tribes, 'whereas the remainder of Brittany was settled by the Dumnonii (from Cornwall and Devon) and the Cornavii (from the Severn region)'.

[13] Henry Rowlands, *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*. Rowlands writes: 'The Cornish write and pronounce "d" as a "z". Pen-von-laz with them is pen-von-lad with us.'

Bridgit is everywhere:
In our landscape, in our names, in our language.
She is Bree – she is Bridgit – she is Britain.

Newgrange decoded, or Bru-na-Boyne as the belly of Bridgit

brugh, (Gaelic) n. a large house, a tumulus, a dwelling of fairies.
brù, (Gaelic), n. a big belly, a bulge, a womb.[14]

In *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves has shown that the mythical roots of the great Irish Neolithic temple Newgrange again lie with the ubiquitous Bridgit, here in her guise as the Triple Goddess. For the Dagda, the mythical Father-god and supposed originator of Newgrange, 'evidently a son of the Triple Goddess Brigit', married 'only one wife with three names ... who bore him three daughters all called Brigit ... three of his descendants ... married three princesses who together owned Ireland'.[15] I would venture further and suggest that Newgrange in its legendary guise as Brugh-na-Boyne (or 'faerie mound on the river Boyne') is also Bru-na-Boyne (or 'the womb/belly of Bridgit'). With a Welsh eye, 'Brugh' reads 'Brig', aligning the roots of the words 'belly' and 'womb' with those of 'faerie mound' (reconciling the 'tum' with the 'tumulus', I suppose). As we read in Chapter 2, the now-restored Brig-na-Boyne has enormous Bridgit sisters in the forms of the sacred mounds called Knowth and Dowth, and all three are orientated to form a huge Goddess triangle and are also themselves forms of the landscape Bridgit. The fertile pubic triangle of mounds stands at a great bend in the river Boyne, a place of significant enough 'enfolding' shape to suggest the protecting womb.

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[14] Malcolm Maclennan, *Gaelic Dictionary*

[15] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*

Three Bridgit landscapes

Whilst Bridgit obtained strongholds all over prehistoric Britain and Ireland, there remain certain areas where her influence became so ingrained within the landscape, the languages and the ways of her people that we can still see there more than just vestiges of Bridgit worship right up to the present day. For Bridgit's was often a physical manifestation – undulating hills in an otherwise flat area – and the signs of her, even in the late 20th century, are often revealed in the names of farms and topographical features. Let us look now at three areas of modern Britain where the Bridgit influence has never faded.

1 THE BRIGANTES OF NORTHERN ENGLAND – The Brigantes, or 'people of Bridgit', worshipped their Great Goddess from before Neolithic times right down through the Iron Age into the Roman era. Their lands stretched all the way from the river Humber up to Cheviot, inevitably leaving Bridgit's name in such towns as Brigg, Bridlington, Brigham and Brigsley in Humberside; Briggswath and Breckenbrough in North Yorkshire; Brigflatts, Brigham, Brigsteer and Bridekirk in Cumbria; Brignall up in Durham and Brighouse in West Yorkshire. High up on the Yorkshire Moors, the wrecked Bridestones stone circles[16] still confirm the presence of this Great Goddess, whilst the Yorkshire Wolds to the south are precisely the gentle physical outpouring for which Bridgit is so renowned – indeed, the Neolithic complex along the Gypsey Race still retains its ancient connections at Rudston, home of the largest standing stone in Britain – the twenty-five feet tall Rudston Monolith. Just under two miles to the south stands the great Rudston Beacon, anciently so famous for its celebration of Bridgit's fires that the Romans sent their military road, the Woldgate,[17] right across its summit. And further confirmation of Bridgit's presence is discovered at Breeze farm, sited directly between the Beacon and the Monolith.

This land of the Brigantes had, until its end in 51 CE, been ruled for countless centuries by a matrilinear succession. As each royal princess succeeded her mother as queen she would take on a partner who, though known as king, was really no more than a consort and a temporary one at that. This 'king' of the Brigantes played out his dutiful role only to be ritually sacrificed when his time was done, and it is this extremely archaic element of high sacrifice which brought the Matriarchy to an end. For, in 51 CE, the Brigantes were at war with the incoming tribes of the Belgae. The Brigantes' temporary 'king' was a master-of-war called Venutius, whom the tribe respected and trusted. When Queen Cartimandua expressed her desire to sacrifice Venutius and replace him with her standard-bearer, the tribe rebelled and Cartimandua and her ancient female line finally faded from the scene.[18]

2 BRAAID, BREESHEY & THE BELT OF THE MANX BRIDE – Just as the tribes of North Yorkshire still echoed the religion of the Great Mother until well into historic times, so it was on the mysterious Mona Manannan, the ancient Isle of Man.[G] The Romans never found Man, leaving intact a Goddess culture vestiges of which still resounded as late as the 10th century after Christ, when the northern Manx tribes successfully employed female warriors to defeat their opponents in the south.[19] Man stands at the geographical centre of the British Isles, and its position between the coasts of Northern Ireland and Cumbria placed it as a perfect staging post for Neolithic travellers distributing ceremonial stone axes.[20]

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[16] The High Bridestones are at O.S. 94.848047

[17] In the name Woldgate we see the original meaning of 'gate' as 'passageway' or 'route'. Over the years, this meaning of 'shutting the gate' as in 'shutting off the passageway or route' has migrated. Now the actual object constructed to deny passage has become 'the gate'.

[18] In 61 CE, ten years after Cartimandua's defeat, the Romans destroyed the final British Matriarchy of all – that of Boudicca of the Iceni. The Romans, unfairly claiming land left to them by the temporary Icenean king, Prasutagus, attacked Boudicca's stronghold, cynically raping the queen and her royal daughters on the understanding that they were scourging the living representatives of the Great Mother. Boudicca's supposed revenge on London is legendary, but her ultimate defeat during these 'activities' brought the Matriarchy to an end.

[19] H. S. Corran, *The Isle of Man*

[20] Aubrey Burl, *Records in Stone: Papers in Praise of Alexander Thom*, edited by Clive Ruggles

Two physical outpourings of Bridgit may still be seen on the Isle of Man – these are at Bride, at the northern tip of the island, and at Braaid, a holy area around the hill of Slieau Chiarn, a gentle rolling eminence above the sacred sites of St. Patrick's Chair and Ballingan Keeill. Both monuments are of the early Keltic Christian period – St. Patrick's Chair is an alignment of three standing stones surrounded by a small cairn, whilst Ballingan is an almost circular earthwork with a small unroofed earth and stone cell at its centre, revealing the inevitably Pagan nature of these early attempts at churches. Four miles to the east is the famous St. Bridgit's Nunnery. It is this intriguing range of confounding sacred centres which makes the Isle of Man simultaneously appear both separate and at the crossroads of ancient British civilisation.

Travelling to the north of the island, Bride appears as a gentle verdant rolling of exquisite hills surrounded by an utterly flat area. Two prehistoric mounds remain, each one so assimilated into the general landscape that the mapless pilgrim has no chance of their discovery.

Echoes of Bride are also discovered in the famous Legs of Man, the swastika-like three-legged wheel, the shoes of which nowadays always wear spurs and always run clockwise. Early representations of the Legs of Man, known as the Tryfuss, reveal a far less stylised, spurless image which even ran widdershins, i.e. in the face of the sun. The ancient provenance of the Legs of Man is shown by the appearance of the Tryfuss on coins from ancient Lycia dated at 480 BCE.[21] These Legs of Man share a common ancestry with St. Bridgit's Cross, a pre-Christian sun wheel. Michael Dames writes:

> 'The cross of Bride, as old as the Neolithic ... made either of rush or wheat-straw, these crosses combine harvest gold with Bridgit's yellow flame. Whether in lozenge shape, quartered wheel or *three-legged* [my italics], the dynamic of the solar year is conveyed.'[22]

Curiously, a St. Bridgit's Cross with three-banded arms echoing the Legs of Man is the symbol of Radio Telefis Eireann in Southern Ireland.

Similar in its balance of design to the Legs of Man is the Cris, or St. Bridgit's Belt, a Goddess belt from western Ireland which was carried from house to house during Bridgit's spring festival of Imbolg. Each householder would step into the belt and draw it down their body before stepping out at the other end – in this way everyone literally 'wore the track of the Sun Goddess'.[23] Imbolg, or 'Laa'l Breeshey' as it is known on Man, was celebrated as late as the 19th century by old Manx women, who still made up a bed for 'Breeshey', leaving a small meal and a candle beside it.[24] On Man, this mutation of Bridgit into Breeshey is also echoed in the so-called Breast Law – an ancient oral recitation made by the lawman at the open court on Tynwald Hill.

3 BRIDGIT THE SWAN GODDESS AT THE DORSET RISINGS OF BRIT & BRIDE – As a Swan Goddess, Bridgit long resounded as a first Goddess of the Kelts. At legendary Glastonbury, with its Bride's Mound and its river Brue, the Tor and its landscape are often represented as a south-westerly flying swan. But the most remarkable manifestation of Bridgit the Swan Goddess lies in seclusion behind Dorset's magnificent Chesil Beach on the English Channel. Here at Abbotsbury, close to the mouths of the rivers Bride and Brit, hundreds of swans arrive every year and the site has been managed since the 13th century, when records first began. North-east of the swannery is the Bridgit village of Littlebredy, whilst to the north stands the magical Long Bredy, a place so built into the womb of the Mother that the air seems moist with fertility. Away to the west on the river Brit stands the town of Bridport, surrounded by a wild landscape of conical hills and a verdant wide-open river mouth. The history of Bridport's name is a running commentary on Bridgit spellings throughout the ages. In 1086, the town was Brideport, then Bridiport in 1142, Brudiport in 1154 and Briteport in 1243. Just to the north was Bradpole, or Bradepol as the town had been in the 13th century, literally the 'Pool O'Brade' or 'Bride'. Along the river Bride, within two miles of the sea, close to Bredy Coppice and Bredy North Hill, Bredy farm was formerly spelled Bridie in 1086, and Bridye in 1303. Yet, despite all this evidence of Bridgit or Bree

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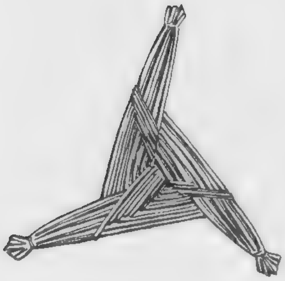
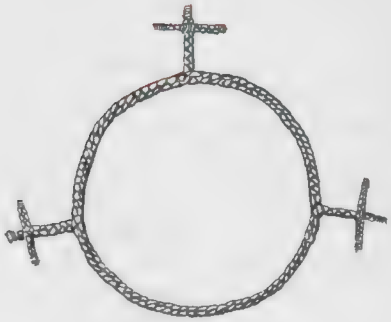
[21] Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols & Sacred Objects*

[22] & [23] Michael Dames, *Mythic Ireland*

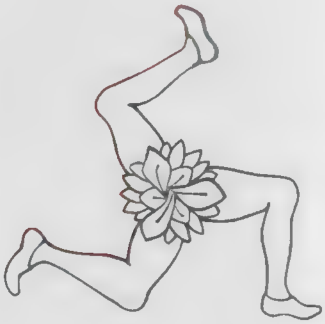
[24] Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun*



St. Bridgit's Cross



St. Bridgit's Belt



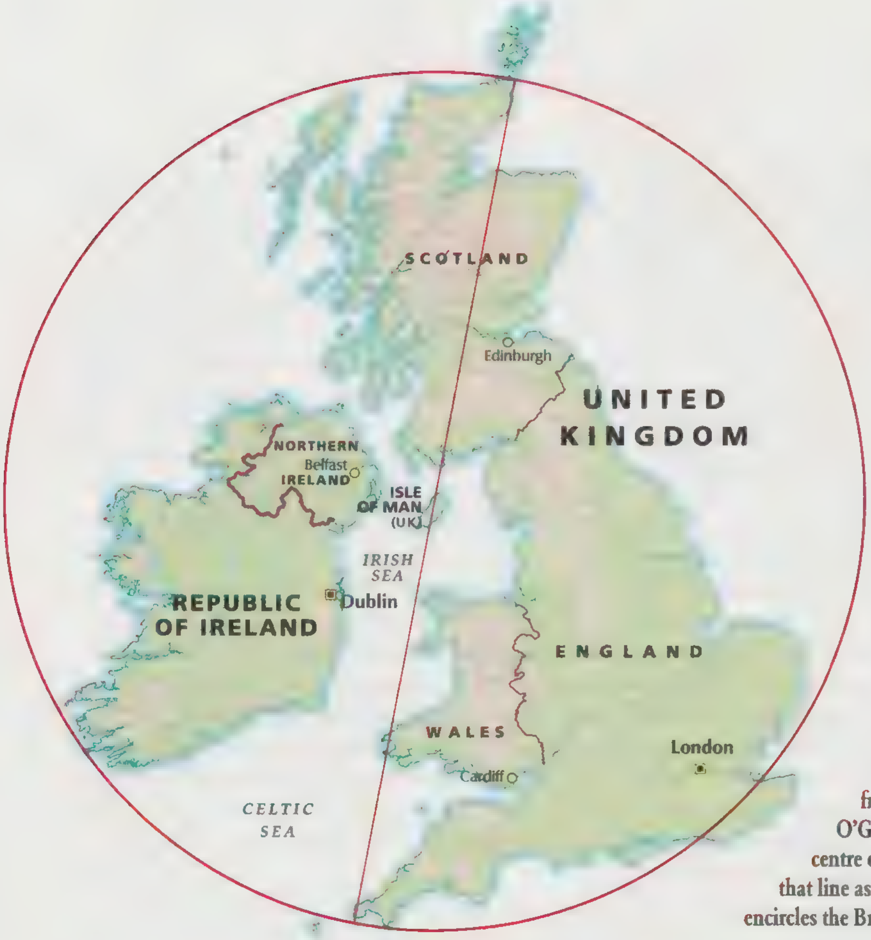
The Tryfuss

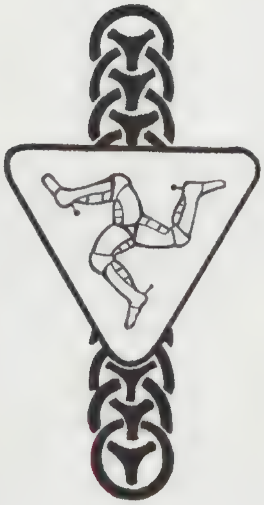
here in Britain, there is also evidence of many other Goddesses, all of a comparable age. And just as Bree has revealed her direct influence through the place-names, rivers and sacred centres of Britain, so these older Goddesses reveal a considerable influence on all of ancient culture spreading throughout Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, southern Europe and out to the east. The names of these Goddesses – all of one syllable and all of them so similar as to have been unchanged since the Stone Ages – sound like primal outpourings. It was from the specific fountainhead of these ab-original Great Mother ancestors that all our Western culture has flowed, and from whom all our language, poetry, ideas and names have flowered.

Decoding the Neolithic prefixes

Two events during the actual writing of this book considerably furthered my pursuit of the Great Goddess herself as the possible Creator source of all early culture. As I sat one day reading *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*, or 'Ancient Anglesey Restored', by the 18th-century antiquary Henry Rowlands, my eyes fell on a small chart in which he had listed the Iron Age Brigantes tribe under two other names which I had never heard before: the Obricynta and the Obricyniaid. As is the case with most works of 1723, Henry Rowlands' book had no footnote to support his claim, but this information nevertheless set my mind reeling. Surely the Brigantes in their purported earlier guise as the Obricynta were thus known because they were the people O'Bridgit, or O'Bree? This idea seemed ludicrously simple, but was well supported by the many Irish names such as O'Donovan or O'Connor, especially in view of Ireland's legend as home of Europe's oldest peoples. We are taught that the Irish 'O' prefix is short for 'of', but this is clearly not the case, as the Irish themselves say a name such as O'Connor as we British would say 'o'clock', the 'O' being almost an 'ah' sound. ('A and O being so easily confused,' as Robert Graves wrote in *The White Goddess.*)

I mused upon the word 'O'Bree' and remembered the French Palaeolithic caves known as the Abri Blanchard and the Abri Castanet. Could these rock shelters have been anciently dedicated to the Great Goddess Bree? Checking my Collins dictionary, the English definition of an abri was also 'a shelter or place of refuge', which further supported these obvious possible Bridgit connections. The Welsh dictionary was equally startling, when *obry* turned out to mean 'the lower realms', or 'down below', and I became suddenly cognisant of the fact that all languages, beyond the Germanic and Keltic, may be linked via the first deities. More obvious everyday words began to throw themselves up as being Bridgit or Bree-derived. As the Harvest Goddess, Bridgit was responsible for the making of 'bread', which is traditionally entwined in 'braids' at the harvest festival. As Brig she was the peatstack of winter fuel for the fire, mutating into the modern English 'brick'. Also, as


SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
UNITED KINGDOM
NORTHERN IRELAND
Belfast
ISLE OF MAN (UK)
IRISH SEA
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Dublin
ENGLAND
WALES
Cardiff
London
CELTIC SEA



The Legs of Man 'unconsciously' echoes that island's place at the geographical centre of Britain. The mystic John Michell has shown that by drawing a line which stretches from the Land's End to John O'Groats, the halfway point is the centre of Man. A circle drawn using that line as a diameter virtually encircles the British Isles.

The Abbotsbury Swannery stands on the Dorset coast, protected by the natural barrier of Chesil Beach. To the right of the photograph is the artificially ringed St. Catherine's Hill.
INSET: Bree's hills of Breidden, in mid-Welsh border country, influenced the position of ancient monuments across that area.

'brig', she was the belly of the sailing ship into which recalcitrant sailors were thrown. Spelt in the Scandinavian manner, 'Brüd', she gave rise to the term 'broody'; her children were her 'brood' and men became drunk on her heady 'brew'.

I applied this 'O' prefix to all the other one-syllable ancient Goddesses whose names I knew and the revelations were equally startling, as will be seen in the following sub-chapters and Goddess charts. But almost before I had had a chance to take these possibilities in, I received another clue from an obvious and nearby source.

As they played in our living-room, my American wife Dorian said to my three-year-old daughter Avalon: 'Gimme some skin, 'cause you're my kin.' My mind reeled. Skin is kin? Skin as kin? Was this another ancient prefix rearing up so soon, or had I just put myself in the place to see the pathway through? In Welsh, the prefix *ys* means both 'is' and 'as'. This prefix was as righteous as the last and I was soon debating whether 'a surge' was a contraction of 'as urge'. Was water which welled up out of the ground making 'a swell' or 'as well'?

Again, I applied this prefix to the known Goddesses with downright success, until other possible prefixes revealed themselves. But rather than face a new time scale for this book which could soon drift into unmanageable proportions, I decided instead that, in the case of *The Modern Antiquarian*, it seemed more desirable to alert readers and travellers to these extremely simple universal codes, in order that they should be able to use them to divine their own home town and country areas from maps or through fieldwork.

For this reason, I have restricted all Goddess vocabularies and tables to the prefixes 'As' and 'O', the latter often including words which nowadays begin with an 'a'.

Hopefully, readers will remember the loose attitudes of the Ancients towards their own spellings and pronunciation, as shown earlier in this chapter. In combining this information with the unambiguous Goddess charts on pages 50–52, this sheer weight of circumstantial evidence may help readers to accept my 'etymosophy'.

Four Neolithic Goddesses

In divining these Neolithic Goddesses, we shall begin first with Koeur, who was essentially a Goddess of Agriculture. Following Koeur come Ma, Hoeur and finally Bree, further revealed as a foundational Goddess. But it gradually becomes clear that these Neolithic Goddesses all began as fundamental totems of their first tribes and, as such, still represented whatever those tribes so chose.

1 KOEUR – As the Great Goddess of Agriculture, Koeur would have been at the heart of all living things, what the French call the *coeur*. She was the kernel in the nut and the core of the apple, the corn in the field as represented in Greece by Kore the Corn Maiden and in Rome by Ceres the Harvest Goddess. As the Agricultural Goddess, Koeur represented the land with such colours as ochre, which were literally 'O'Koeur', whilst the standard unit of land measure, the acre, comes from the German *Acker* and the Norwegian *aker*, again literally 'O'Koeur'. This tradition continues today amongst some older Londoners, who still refer to their money as 'ackers'. Both the sycamore and the oak originated as trees of the Goddess Koeur, the former being known as the *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The latter appears to have been dedicated to Koeur as the oaken tree, as is shown by the acorns, which were known in Old English as *aecern*.

It is in her most fundamental role as Hill Goddess that Koeur has shaped the land around us. For it is she who named the 'cairns' or 'carns' on ancient hilltops, and the fortified hills each known in Welsh as a *caer*. The Latin for 'ceremonies' is *caerimonia*, revealing Koeur's influence in the hilltop beginnings of all such rituals. In Cumbria, hills like Castlehowe Scar and Knipe Scar are dedicated to this Goddess, for each 'scar', from the Old Norse *sker*, is simply a contraction of 'as Koeur'.

In Britain, the incoming Kelts loved Koeur and named many of their Goddesses and Gods after her, including Keridwen, Kerhiannon, Cernunnus and Korsair. Over sixty megalithic sites in Brittany belong to Koeur, including Kercado, which is the oldest megalithic structure in the world. Like the Irish faeries, who supposedly returned to the prehistoric mounds which they built, the Bretons honour their *Korred*, or 'Old Ones', who anciently erected the menhirs and dolmens. Every one of the Breton 'little people' appears to have originated from Koeur, for their many names are Kerions, Korreds, Korrs, Kornikaned, Corrandonnets, Corriquets and Kouricans.[25] Each one of them is repulsed and powerless in the face of iron, suggesting an ancient tradition of the times when the warlike Bronze Age invaders decimated the gentler lifestyles of the Neolithics. Inevitably, with the much later rise of the Patriarchy, Koeur's name became a 'curse' and her followers merely curs, or the accursed. In *The Greek Myths*, Robert Graves referred to the Sphinx Goddess of Thebes as 'the man-snatching Cer'.[26]

2 MA – The Great Goddess Ma was the ancient centre of Motherhood, for she was all things Maternal. Ma inspired 'matrimony' and the 'mattress' because she was the home-maker or 'mate'. In Egypt, Maat was the Goddess of Truth who wore a single ostrich feather, whilst as Ma-Nu she symbolised the primal deep and was represented by three cauldrons, according to *The Book of the Dead*. In Rome, much later she became the Goddess Matrona, whilst here in Britain she was Madron, 'the Mother of All, the bounteous Water of Life'. It was only much later when the Patriarchal Church took control that Ma mutated into the Faerie Queen Mab.

In Britain, the enormous Marden henge in Wiltshire is the largest Neolithic site dedicated to this Goddess, whilst the Bronze Age settlement high on the sacred Derbyshire hill known as Mam Tor[G] was the most tenacious. Mam means 'mother' in all the so-called Keltic languages, as well as being the root of the word 'mammary'. Both as Mat and in her later guise as Madron,[27] her most sacred places were at natural springs or wells. There is still a sacred well dedicated to this Goddess at the tiny village of Madron on the Land's End peninsula, whilst her most famous manifestation is on one of the five 'divine' river Derwents at the sacred spring in Derbyshire which still pours into the 'lake of the Goddess Mat' or Matlock Bath. Her love was always inflaming and inspirational, and to be driven by the love of Mat was to be 'amateur', as in 'lover'. Even nowadays, to incite sexual love and real desire is to be 'amatory'. Mat's power as a symbol of Motherhood waned during the dark patriarchal power of the Medieval period, when talking 'as Mat' was to be a 'smatter', or gossip. Nowadays, to have 'a superficial knowledge' of everything is still to have a 'smattering' of information. Tragically, the term 'mater', so beloved of public schoolboys, was finally further reduced to 'matter' by the scientists.

3 HOEUR – It was the Great Goddess Hoeur who defined the woman as 'her' and was later demonised by the Church as the 'whore'. She was the 'hole' out of which all life sprang. Hoeur it was who named the hearth, the home, hostel and hovel, whilst the herding of cattle and the hoarding of winter grain were all done by the herdsman and the howard. Hoeur was also Hoe-ur, for it was her hoe (Old High German *Houwa*) which cut down the crops and her horticulture which tended to the herbs. In *The Greek Myths* 2, Robert Graves refers to this Goddess as 'Hawwa, "the Mother of All Living", who appears in Genesis ii as Eve', whilst Jewish mystical tradition knows her as Hawah, 'the pre-Hebraic name of Eve'.[28] In Britain, she appears on the ancient Wirral at Hawarden, literally 'the den of Hawar' (*see Goddess Charts, Chapter 5*), whilst this Goddess is most famously found in Brontë country, where the twin villages of Haworth and Hole stand together below Penistone Hill. In South Wales, her ancient settlement upon Crickhowell was legendary, and now-destroyed megalithic monuments littered the surrounding foothills. In Cumbria, there was a prehistoric settlement at Howarcles, on the Lyvennet Beck near the Gamelands[G] stone circle.

But the glorious Neolithic settlement at Knap of Howar[G], on the Orkney island of Papa Westray, is by far the most magically placed monument dedicated to Hoeur. In 1992 CE, I discovered a nine-inch-long twin-ended phallus carved from black Orcadian flagstone on the beach at Howar, just twenty paces from the Neolithic settlement. The discovery of such an obsessively balanced phallic artefact at Knap of Howar throws up another most perplexing question of balance. Why does the Star of David – a sexually balanced image consisting of the downward Triangle of the Goddess united with the priapic Pyramid of the God – represent the most patriarchal religion of them all? Jewish Gnostic texts claim that the

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[25] Nancy Arrowsmith & George Morse, *A Fieldguide to the Little People*

[26] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 82.6

[27] Kathy Jones, *Spinning the Wheel of Ana*

[28 & 29] Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols & Sacred Objects* once unspeakable Tetragrammaton YHWH, which much later became pronounced 'Jehovah', began as the simplified and female HWH, or 'Hawah'.[29] Robert Graves has written:

> 'In a somewhat obscene passage in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel [23.4] is to be found Jehovah's bill of divorcement against his two partner goddesses, who are there named Aholah and Aholibah. Nevertheless, the Trinity continued undissolved in a Jewish temple at Elephantine in Upper Egypt until five hundred years ago.'[30]

The subsequent creation of the later male Holy Trinity appears to have been an obvious and successful patriarchal attempt to erase the ancient origins of this Triple Hoeur Goddess, apparently then united as Hawah, A'Holah and A'Holibah. Yet, even here in the name of this final Goddess is the origin of 'holy', literally the Great Hole.

4 BREE – Finally, let us return again to Bree, for she holds secrets that are not just curious to British minds, but to those of any human readers. We saw earlier in this chapter how Bree was celebrated in language, so let us now discover where she was later controlled or even demonised by the Patriarchal religions. For, just as Koeur gave her name to the later Christian Church via the Scandinavian *kirk*, so the clergy were forced to find a place for one as important as Bree, and therefore gave her name to the priest and the prior. But other sides of Bree were, in Britain, considered too shadowy for Christian piety, and her name for the penis, the 'prick', became an unutterable slang word, even though Priapus, the Greek god with the impossibly large erection, must have originated from the same root as Bree. Both 'pry' and 'private parts' have a similar root to these words, and the ancient Welsh formerly knew Britain as the similarly spelled Prydain. In Cornwall, Bree in her role 'as Brig' also gave her name to the little people, or 'Spriggans', whilst Bree in Scotland eventually mutated from the three Bridgits of the Triple Goddess to the demon-familiars known as Prig, Prim and Pricker.[31]

Bree also gave her name to all things 'pretty', though its original northern European meaning was not merely a shallow physical description. It manifested in the Old English *praettig*, which means 'clever', and the Old Norse *prettugr*, which means 'cunning'. The spring festival was Bree's most special time, when she appeared as the Great Goddess Bring. Bring was the bringer of the seeds of harvest, and when the earth made 'as Bring', 'springtime' was here, from the Old Norse *springa*. Water which appeared as though out of nowhere was also a spring, or 'as Bring', whilst a shoot, twig or the sprout of a tree was 'as Bree' or 'as Brig', literally a 'spray' or a 'sprig'. On the island of Rousay in the Orkneys, the whole of the north-west coast is dedicated to Bree as Bring. From the kilns of Brin-Novan to the Brae of Moan via Bring Head, the land thereabouts is called simply Brings.[32] The narrow waters and headland between Orkney Mainland and the island of Hoy are similarly named.

Bridgit's British contemporaries were those Keltic Goddesses such as Madron, Keridwen and Verbeia, whilst a millennium before this time, their earlier forms would have manifested as Bree, Ma, Koeur and Ver. But it is to the original Great Goddess that we now turn – she who begat all of these Neolithic Goddesses, she who named the earth, named the air, named the awe and the urge that caused that original surge of human life on the Mother Earth.

Ur indeed.

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30 Robert Graves, ***King Jesus***

31 Jennifer Westwood, ***Albion***. On page 413 of her epic, Westwood quotes Robert Chambers' ***The Picture of Scotland*** from 1827, telling a story which concerns the legendary Scots wizard Michael Scot.

32 Brings is on the Rousay section of the Orkney Mainland map at O.S. 6.38.34. The same map shows the Bring Deeps area of Hoy between Bring Head, White Breast and Houton Head in the squares around O.S. 6.29.02.

CHAPTER

five

Goddess figurine, city of Ur,
c. 6,000 years ago.
© The British Museum

The Book of Ur

Venus of Willendorf,
c. 25,000 years ago.

'One of the great difficulties which faces anyone who attempts to unravel problems of the ancient world is that of names… The deities of antiquity have a very great number of names. Not only were they known by different names in different places, but they often had at least three different phases, old, middle-aged, and young, which were all known by different names in one place. Added to this, conquerors like the Romans tended to add religions, picked up all over their empire, to such of their own gods who had some points in common… Isis is said to have 10,000 names; the Irish Badb when questioned in a mythical tale gave thirty-one of her own.'

T.C. LETHBRIDGE, *WITCHES*

'Those endless lists of "so-and-so's *hamms*" attributed, in the want of any more convincing explanation, to unknown Saxon landowners… may hide Celtic names or Celtic words: no-one has ever been minded to look.'

JAMES RATTUE, *THE LIVING STREAM*

Beating the patriarchal retreat

A major problem of the 20th century has been wrestling inaccurate but popular notions of the ancient past from a public desperate to know more about the subject. The centuries of tales of romantic Keltic astronomer-priests and white-clad Druids at stone altars have blurred the public perception of the ancient past to such a degree that each 'new' restoration of the past has succeeded only in causing more confusion. New discoveries which should have swept away old ideas have, instead, been merely added on to those old ideas, creating a large and unwieldy soup of prehistory. If modern medicine had been introduced to the public as unsuccessfully as our notions of prehistory have been, then we should still be allowing leeches to co-exist alongside antibiotics on the shelves of chemists everywhere.

If we judge the Ancients by our modern standards, then they can only ever appear as inferior. Brought up to worship in the safety of a roofed Christian church, most prehistorians studying stone circles will naturally gravitate towards Stonehenge as the closest example of a 'real building' that they can find. And even then, Stonehenge will only appear 'better' because it is closer to what they know. On an intellectual level, the prehistorian knows that the stone circle builders were not barbarians. But, in his heart, he will place the efforts of the trilithon-builders of Stonehenge far higher in evolutionary terms than the builders who created the mighty open rings of Cornwall and Cumbria, which have neither roof nor walls and which seem openly to revel in their outdoor situation. Think of how many times the Druids have been dismissed as illiterate barbarians, when even the prejudiced Roman historian Tacitus admitted that they were highly aware of script, but considered it to have been 'unfit for the recording of wisdom'. What chance does Stone Age Humanity have of being judged fairly if the expectations of modern scholars are so at odds with the original aims of those ancient people? This lack of understanding extends even to disciplines such as ley hunting, which are rife with modern 'pseudo-rules' which have been superimposed upon the archaic world scheme. Some ley hunters will happily include modern churches, moats and even farms upon their 'ancient' ley lines, so long as the pencil line on their map is extra sharpened for 'accuracy'.

But in the study of the early Matriarchy, it is most important of all to at least make an attempt to sink below the patriarchal thought processes of Classical Greece and ancient Rome, and before the Keltic tribes of ancient Britain and Europe, to a universal point where all these nations began. In *A Dictionary of World Mythology*, Arthur Cotterell made the point:

> *'The Romans were fully aware that Scandinavia equalled a* vagina nationum, *"a womb of nations", continually sending forth new waves of migration. What they could not know was that the Germanic settlers of the north belonged to the Indo-European language group from which the Italic tongue had also descended.'*

And by studying the languages of the Kelts alongside the Greek, Latin and Scando-Germanic, a correlation of certain sounds begins to appear. These are all primal sounds of one syllable, for they represent language at its sub-basement stage. But there is a resounding in these primal stages which, when unlocked, can be shown to make sense right throughout Europe. As we saw in Chapter 4, the names of the various Neolithic Goddesses can be decoded so long as we know the basic template and the rules with which to test them. But here, at the rising of the Great Goddess Ur, we begin to see the source from which all Goddess culture appears to have first flowed.

Ur indoors

In the beginning of all things was the Universe and all things were of the Universe. For Stone Age Humanity, the Great Goddess was the Universe and she made the Universe happen. But her very first name was much simpler than Universe – her name was Ur.[1] She appears to have been the Originator, or Mother, of all the Goddesses we have so far surveyed, and, even today, the Great Goddess Ur is still so central to Indo-European language that the whole of Western culture would fall without her. What she began thousands of years ago has become so interwoven with the rest of Western Humanity's culture that she is now an essential and structural part of the fabric. Indeed, all time is her era. Like Bree, her name in Britain is invoked many times every hour of every day, but, greater than Bree, Ur's magic also appears to have affected the rest of Indo-European culture. For millennia throughout the Stone Ages, the Indo-European tribes migrated west from Asia into the Balkans, Italy and the Iberian peninsula, and north into Scandinavia, before crossing into France and Germany, and finally the British Isles. And each successive wave of migrators brought further news of this original Great Goddess.

Ur gave her name to the legendary first city of Sumer, built on a tributary of the Euphrates. She also named the neighbouring Sumerian cities of Uruk and Eridu. As the home of magic and astrology, the city of Ur was most famous for its part in the creation of the legendary Ur-Text. The writer Barbara Walker explains:

> *'The Ur-Text was supposed to be a magical grammar of the primordial tongue, whose words God pronounced at Creation in order to bring forth the things themselves; that is, the words could create just by being spoken…*

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[1] 'New discoveries are self-evident with hindsight,' Charles Hapgood, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*

Some of the beliefs concerning the Ur-Text became attached to the Latin Bible...'[2]

As Ur crossed into Europe, or Ur-opa, she became known by early Scandinavian tribes as Urd or Urtha, from which we derive the English 'earth'. The most ancient Ur tribes of all were, of course, the Irish or Erse. The later name Eire comes from the Goddess Eriu, a later aspect of Ur, who formed a Triple Goddess with Banba and Fotla.[3] Their mythical love of peace eventually saw the Irish, or Erse, driven into the far west of Europe by the later warlike Bronze Age tribes.

All aspects of Ur strike a chord of absolute originality. The dictionary definition of the prefix 'ur' gives its meaning as 'original, primitive', while words such as 'early', 'archaic' and 'urn' all have meanings which evoke great age. 'Erstwhile' means 'long ago; formerly', whilst the archaic word 'ere' is described in the dictionary as 'a poetic word for *before*', which relates to the Old High German as *er*. Even the great prehistoric cow known as the aurochs can now be revealed as the 'ur-ox'. Similarly, in German, fundamental words such as *Urzeit* and *Ursprung* mean 'the first time' and 'the source', respectively. The *Irrfard* is an archaic term for 'wanderings' or a 'roving expedition', whilst the Old High German *Urlag* describes 'the ancient law'.

The Egyptian symbol of the Goddess was the serpent Uraeus, 'suggesting that in pre-dynastic times all serpents were female and divine...'[4] Even more intriguing is the possibility of Uraeus the serpent being a contraction of 'as Ur-pent'.

In megalithic Britain, the presence of Ur is felt most keenly on the sacred Ure–Swale Plateau in North Yorkshire[G] and around the Aberdeenshire stone circles which populate the banks of the river Urie. West of the Urie stands the Ardlair stone circle,[G] literally the 'lair of the Scandinavian Mother Goddess Urd, or "earth" '. The huge Kilmartin Valley complex[G] stands in the Add Valley (pronounced 'Ard'), from which comes the origin of Argyllshire. Like the rest of this landscape, the sacred rock of Dunadd also takes its name from the Goddess Urd. In central Lowland Scotland, the two giant stones which stand in the shadow of Bennarty are called Orwell, probably named after her nearby holy well.

Nowadays, later patriarchal powerplays have meant that 'to Ur' is 'to err', or make an error; whilst words such as 'irritating' and 'irrational' have highly negative connotations. Perhaps the roots of the word 'erase' should be further investigated, for its dictionary definition is 'to remove completely; destroy all traces of'. Knowing the power wielded by the patriarchal Churches of the past, it is troubling that this word breaks down into 'er-rase', literally to 'raze Ur to the ground'.

Ur, Urd & Mother Urtha – the calling of Ver

The very earliest days of Western culture were confusing. Everyone had almost the same name, the name of the Great Goddess Ur. And all things were of Ur – because she had inspired all things. But this confusion caused the ever-practical Ancients to take action and the simple vowel-only name of the Great Goddess Ur mutated into other later Neolithic Goddesses with the simple additions of different consonants at the front of her name. It is my assertion that these first new Goddesses were probably Koeur, Hoeur and the fertility Goddess Ver, but the chronological order in which they arrived is currently of little consequence. It is far more important at this early stage of discovery to demonstrate the actual existence of these new Goddesses. We have already seen Koeur's central role as Goddess of Agriculture, so let us now investigate Ver as Water Goddess, Fire Goddess and Bringer of Life.

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[2] Barbara G. Walker, ***The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets***

[3] Kathy Jones, ***The Ancient British Goddess***

[4] Barbara G. Walker, ***The Woman's Encyclopedia of Symbols and Sacred Objects***

UR – AN ETYMOSOPHY

HER DIVINE DESCENDANTS

Ura	'The Sphinx … is Ura or Urana the goddess, with dominion over air and earth, who delegates sovereignty to her royal son, the King.' (Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*)
Urd	Note: This Norse form of the Mother Goddess was also known by such mutations as Erda and Eartha. Urd was tended by the Norns, Norse mythology's version of the Triple Goddess.
Urtha	Note: A Norse version of the Mother Goddess Urd, from which we derive the English form 'earth'.
Urth	Note: With her sisters Verthandi and Skuld, Urth is the third of the Norns, the Norse equivalent of the Triple Goddess.
Eriu	'Eire takes its name from Eriu, the Triple Goddess in Ireland who was known as Eriu, Banba and Fotla.' (Kathy Jones, *The Ancient British Goddess*)
Er	Note: From the deity Er came Irminsul, the legendary pillar, or world axis, of German legend, which holds heaven and Earth in place.
Ua Zit	'Until the time of the invasion, the Neolithic cultures of Egypt appear to have held the Cobra Goddess of the north (Ua Zit) and the Vulture Goddess of the south (Nekhebt) as the two supreme deities,' according to Merlin Stone's book *When God Was a Woman*.
Urana	According to Robett Graves' *The Greek Myths 3.1*, this Greek Goddess was 'Urana ("queen of the mountains" "queen of summer", "queen of the winds", or "queen of the wild oxen") – the goddess in her orgiastic midsummer aspect.'
Ursul	A Saxon Goddess known as the She-Bear, Ursul was so important that early Christian fathers Christianised her as St. Ursula. Ursul appeared as Ercel in Thomas Rhymer's *Erceldoune*.
Eris	Eris is the Greek Goddess of Discord.
Urania	Note: This Greek Goddess, known as 'the Celestial One', was an aspect of Aphrodite in her role as Queen of Heaven.
Uranus	Note: The personification of the sky god in the Greek myths.
Urion	A fundamental link is noted in Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths 41.f5*, between this god, Orion in his ancient form, and the word 'urine': 'The myth of Orion's birth is perhaps … to account for the first syllable of his ancient name, Urion, as though it were derived from *ourein*, "to urinate".'
Eros	The love son of Aphrodite.
Erebus	In the Greek myths, he is the god of darkness, son of Chaos and brother of the Night.

A VOCABULARY

earth	Old High German *Ertha*, Greek *era*
early	'characteristic of a period far back in time'
erst	'*Archaic*. 1. long ago; formerly. 2. at first [Old English] *aerest* earliest, superlative of *aer*, early…'
ere	Note: This is 'a poetic word for before', which relates to the Old High German as *Er*, the Old Norse as *ar* and in the Greek *eri*.
air	Greek *aer*, 'the lower atmosphere'
er	Cornish, 'hour'
ur	Swedish, '*prep*. out of; from'
ur-	German *pref.* '*Ur-urmutter*, great-grandmother'
ur	Gaelic, 'ur the yew-tree … the seventeenth and last letter of the Gaelic alphabet'
urad	Gaelic, '*adv.* above … aur-ard, very high'
awe	'*Archaic*. power to inspire fear or reverence'
aura	'a distinctive air or quality considered to be characteristic of a person or thing'
aurora	'*Poetic*. the dawn'; literally the 'aura of Ur'
urge	'*Archaic or literary*. to stimulate, excite or incite'
Urlag	Old High German, 'ancient law'
aurochs	Note: *singular*. a prehistoric ox, in Swedish literally the *ur-oxe*. Origins are in the Old High German *Ur* and the Old Norse *urr*.
urus	'another name for the aurochs'
ur rune	It has been suggested by Jan Fries in his book *Helrunar* that the ur rune echoed the shape of the aurochs, the famous prehistoric wild ox of legend.
Urda	Like the Druids' stages of knowledge known as Annwn and Abred, so the rune scholars of Scandinavia employed the three-tiered system of Urda, Werdandi and Skulda. The Urda section holds all the fundamental and earliest information, what the magician/rune scholar Jan Fries, in his book *Helrunar*, called 'the soil out of which the system developed'.
ore	'any naturally occurring mineral or aggregate of minerals from which important constituents can be extracted … Old English *ar*, *ora* … Dutch *oer*'
or	This is an archaic word meaning 'before'. It is related to the Old High German *Er*, and the Old Norse *ar*, both of which mean 'early'.
orb	'5. an archaic word for circle'
origin	'a primary source; derivation'
urn	'a vase used as a receptacle for the ashes of the dead…'
ira	Old High German *ira*, 'her'
erstwhile	'long ago; formerly'
Erse	Note: Another name for 'Gaelic' – the language was literally 'Ur's'
Erin	'an archaic or poetic name for Ireland'
errant	as in 'knight-errant', related to 'errand'. This form of the word does not derogate its subject but means '*Archaic or literary*. wandering in search of adventure … from Old French: journeying'.
archaic	related to the Greek *arkhe* (beginning) and *arkhaios* (ancient), which appears to literally mean 'Ur-Chaos'
urchin	'*Obsolete*. an elf or sprite'
ura	In *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves writes: 'The bottom joint of the fool's-finger is Ura, the heather – a suitable tree for the initiation of Scottish witches who, according to Shakespeare, met on blasted heaths.'
urz	Breton, 'order, commandment'
Irrbild	German, 'phantom'
Irrfard	German, 'wanderings, roving expedition'
Ursprung	German, 'source', literally 'the first spring'
Urzeit	German, 'first time'
urgammal	Swedish, 'extremely old; ancient (primitive)'
artha	Sanskrit, 'riches' or 'abundance', 'root of Indo-European names for Mother Earth: Ertha, Hretha, Eortha, etc.' according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
irj	Arabic, 'an area of shifting sand dunes in a desert, especially the Sahara'
ouranos	Ancient Greek, 'heaven'
Ermin	Old High German, 'whole, universal'
Irminsul	The legendary Irminsul pillar was the world axis of Germanic lore which held heaven and Earth in place. It is said to be named after the deity Er, Eor and Ear.
Ursa Major	This constellation was often known as Mistress Ursula in Britain, according to Gertrude and James Jobes' astronomical journal *Outer Space*. Ursa is the equivalent of Artio, the Helvetian Goddess known as the Great Bear.
Urdarbrunnr	This mythical 'Stream of Urd' was said to hold the source of life and mind, and the gods could only render judgement by standing at the fount of Urd. Brian Branston's *Gods of the North* explains that this centre of knowledge was female, and necessary to both the mortals and the gods, in order for them to gain understanding.
Erl-King	The old German Alder King was later demonised into this bogeyman.
Ouroboros	This was the Earth serpent, known in Brittany as the 'Dragon of the Bretons'. The legends of sea-serpents hark back to an earlier time when the moving sea at the shoreline was, itself, the Ouroboros encircling the world.
Urals	These are the mountains which define the northern border of Europe with Asia.

KOEUR – AN ETYMOSOPHY

HER DIVINE DESCENDANTS

Kore	Note: 'The Children of Kore, or Koreshites, were the tribe to which the prophet Mohammed belonged. When the patriarchy took over Mecca after its rededication to Islam, the holy women were replaced by holy men, who took the name "Sons of the old woman".' (Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*)
Ker	'Ker is the Triple Grain Goddess… She is the Grain Hag, the Keres or Fates of Death,' according to *The Ancient British Goddess* by Kathy Jones.
Cerdo	'The famous *cerdana* harvest-dance of the Spanish Pyrenees was perhaps first performed in honour of this Goddess, who has given her name to the best corn-land in the region, the valley of Cerdana… The syllable *Cerd* figures in Iberian royal names…' (Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*)
Ceres	'Ceres was a Roman title of the Great Goddess as Mother of the Harvest and ruler of all grains, which are still called "cereals" after her major early summer festival, the Cerealia.' (Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*)
Keres	This Greek deity is one of 'the female spirits of fate', according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
Kernel	Note: Kernel is the Corn Maiden, or spirit of the harvest, and images of her are created using the very last gleanings of corn. Representations of the Kernel are still made all over Britain.
Car-Dia	Note: Literally means 'Koeur the deity'.
Car	'The Goddess Car, or Kore, or Ker, or Q're, or Cerdo; one of the most widespread name-cycles of the Indo-European Goddess,' according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*. 'Passion Sunday, the fifth in Lent … was formerly known as Care, Carle, Carline or Carling Sunday. In Scotland a family feast was often eaten on that day, at which a spiced cake called a Car Cake was customarily eaten.' (Jennifer Westwood, *Albion*)
Carne	The Cretan Virgin Mother of the Goddess Britomartis. This is another form of Car, Car-Dia, Carmenta, Carna, etc., according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
Carna	Note: This Etruscan-Roman Mother of festivals was also known as Carmenta.
Kauri	'a pre-Vedic version of the Goddess in India' (Walker, p.507). Possibly linked to the cowrie shell and its physical resemblance to the genitalia of the female.
Ceres Legifera	The name of this Goddess of the Romans translates as 'Ceres the Lawgiver'. In his *Myth, Religion and Mother Right*, J. J. Bachofen suggests that the priestesses of Ceres may have founded the Roman legal system.
Cernunnus	The roots of this agricultural Keltic god are shown in the manner in which he was treated. Cernunnus was dismembered and boiled in a cauldron, also of Koeur. In this way he would rise again from the dead, according to Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Grail Legend*.

A VOCABULARY

coeur	French, 'heart'
cor	Latin, 'heart'
core	'2. the central, innermost or most essential part of something … of uncertain origin'
kernel	'1. the edible seed of a fruit or nut within the shell or stone … Old English *cyrnel*, a little seed'
corn	'any of various cereal crops'
acorn	Old English *aecern*
acre	Old English *aecer*, 'field'
aker	Swedish, 'cultivated ground'
ackers	archaic slang word denoting money; unit of currency, related to 'acre' via Norse *aker* and Welsh *aker*
cause	'Latin *causa*, cause, reason, motive'
course	'from Old French *cours*'
curse	'[Old English *cursian*, to curse, from *curs*, a curse]'
call	'to speak or utter loudly … so as to attract attention'
caw	'the cry of a crow, rook or raven'
corvine	'of, relating to, or resembling a crow'
corvus corone	Latin, 'carrion crow'
corr	Gaelic, 'heron, crane, stork'
korp	Swedish, 'raven'
carrion	'dead and rotting flesh'
caro	Latin, 'flesh'
cairbh	Gaelic, 'carcass, a dead body'
cairis	Gaelic, 'corpse, carcass; a wake'
corf	Cornish, 'a body; a dead body'
corse	'an archaic word for corpse'
corpse	like the French *corps*
corps	'a body of people associated together'
caul	'a portion of the amniotic sac, sometimes covering a child's head at birth'
cord	'2. string or thin rope made of several twisted sttands; 3. a ribbed fabric, especially corduroy; 7. a unit of volume for measuring cut wood'
caudal	'relating to, resembling, or in the position of the tail … from Latin *cauda*, tail.' A link may be made between caudal and cord; the longer tails of many animals could certainly be deemed cord-like.
chorus	'(in Ancient Greece) a lyric poem sung by a group of dancers, originally as a religious rite; 2. a recurring refrain…'
kor	Swedish, 'choir'
chord	'the simultaneous sounding of a group of musical notes … short for ACCORD'
accord	'agreement; conformity … stem of *cor*, heart'

Definitions are
taken from *Collin*
English Dictionar
Other quotations a
from books in the
Bibliography.

korum	Swedish, 'prayers'
cauldron	'a large pot used for boiling, esp. one with handles … from earlier cauderon'
coire	Gaelic, 'cauldron, kettle'
cork	'the thick light porous outer bark of the cork oak … probably from the Arab *qurq*.' This last word relates to Kouer as Qu'a, via the quernstone and *quercus*, the Latin for 'oak'.
kormos	Greek, 'tree trunk'
corsage	'from *cors*, body'
corker	'1. Slang; something or somebody striking or outstanding.' Possibly literally 'Kouer/Kouer', using the same doubling device as that discovered in fervour, or 'Ver-ver'.
cae'r	Welsh, 'field'
cairn/carn	'a mound of stones erected as a memorial or marker'
caer	Welsh, 'hillfort'
corrie	'(in Scotland) a circular hollow on a hillside'
care	This fundamental word appears to share its roots with *karuna*, which means 'Mother love'.
kern	'*Archaic*. a loutish peasant'
courage	Mother Courage
curse	Note: From Old English *curs*, this is 'an appeal to a supernatural power for harm to come to a specific person, group'. Otherwise described in the dictionary as an 'oath', perhaps the oath was simply 'Koeur's'.
cow	German, *Kuh*
khersos	Note: (Greek, 'dry land') related to the Russian *chernozem*, 'a black soil rich in humus and carbonates'
causeway	'a raised path or road crossing water, marshland, sand, etc.'
carry	'to take or bear (something) from one place to another'; 'to transfer for consideration: he carried his complaints to her superior'; 'to be transmitted, or serve as a medium for transmitting: sound carries best over water'
carriage	'from Old Northern French *cariage*, from *carier*, to CARRY'
cart	'from Old Norse *kartr* … see CAR'
cur	mongrel
Cor!	exclamation
ker	Breton, '*adj.* dear, beloved, highly priced'
kerentiez	Breton, 'blood-relationship'
cer	Welsh, 'close-by, near'
ceraint	Welsh, 'relatives'
cerddor	Welsh, 'musician, craftsman', also *cerddwr*, Welsh for 'musician, walker'
cerrynt	Welsh 'current, journey'
cerennydd	Welsh 'friendship, kinship'
cerddelw	Welsh 'statue, graven image'
cerrig	Welsh 'standing stone'
occur	'1. to happen; take place; come about… 2. to be found or be present; exist'
ochre	'any of various natural earths containing ferric oxide, silica and alumina'
oak	The oak is Quercus, related to Koeur via her incarnation as Q're. From this root comes the quernstone (a stone hand mill for grinding corn). All things quercine, 'relating to the oak', share the roots of 'queer', 'quarter' and 'quarry' ('an animal, bird or fish that is hunted … from Latin *cor*, heart').
cereal	'any grass that produces an edible grain … from CERES'
cair	Gaelic, 'peat moss'
cair	Gaelic, 'form of'
corn	Cornish, 'a horn'
corr	Gaelic, 'excess, surplus'
car	Cornish, 'a friend'
kors	Swedish, 'cross'

KOEUR IN BRITAIN – THE KERN BABY AS HARVEST QUEEN

As the dominant agricultural Goddess in Britain, Koeur appeared as the 'spirit of the corn' or 'kern baby', in Last Sheaf ceremonies all over Britain. The last sheaf of a harvest was considered by agriculturists to have held incredible power. In his book *Stations of the Sun*, Ronald Hutton has written:

> From bearing home in triumph a last sheaf decorated with ribbons, it was but a short step to dressing it up or weaving it into a rough human figure … They were 'kirns', 'kerns', or 'kern babies (again apparently from 'corn') in Southern Scotland, north-east England down to Lincolnshire, and Norfolk … in Northumberland … 'kern babies', or 'harvest queens'; in Yorkshire 'kerns' … in Berwickshire 'the kirn' or 'the queen' … In nineteenth-century Galloway it could be dressed in a child's long white frock … and carried home from the last field by workers singing:
>
> [Farmer Giles'] corn's weel shorn,
> Bless the day that he was born!
> Kirny, Kirny, oo,
> Kirny, Kirny, oo!

Celebrations centred around a harvest feast, which, as Hutton explains, was variously known 'in northern England as the … "kern supper", "churn supper" … in southern Scotland as the "kirn" or "kirn supper", in northern Scotland as the "maiden feast", [and] the kirn…'

[illegible]

HER DIVINE DESCENDANTS

Hera	literally 'woman'; the Greek Goddess Hera was mother of Hercules and wife of Zeus
Horus	Child of the Goddess Isis. Egyptian pharoahs were honoured with the name of Horus and spoken of as 'suckled by Isis', according to *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves.
Herne	'Whatever his origins may be, Herne is popularly supposed to appear [in Britain] … before each outstanding national disaster,' according to Guy Williams' *A Guide to the Magical Places of England, Wales and Scotland*.
Holle	Holle was a version of the Scando-Germanic Hel. According to Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, Germans considered the legendary Dame Holle's Well to have been the source of all the Earth's children – the *Holle*, or fountainhead.
Hawwa	In *The Greek Myths 2*, Robert Graves lists her as 'Hawwa, "the Mother of All Living", who appears in *Genesis ii* as Eve'.
Hawah	'the pre-Hebraic name of Eve' (Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*)
Har	This Babylonian mother of harlots was the source of the word 'harem'. Coincidentally, the Haram is the sacred Islamic sanctuary in Mecca, where rests the great black stone of the central enclosure, known as the Kaaba.
Aholah & Aholibah	'Aholah played the harlot when she was mine … committed her whoredoms … with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria… And when her sister Aholibah saw this … She doted upon … captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously … all of them desirable young men.' (God/Yahweh speaking to Ezekiel, Ezekiel 23:5–12)
Horai	'HORAI: The Seasons; as the name implies they were goddesses of the seasons who make flowers and plants grow.' (Carolyne Larrington, *The Woman's Companion to Mythology*)
Hat-Hor	This Egyptian Goddess, also known as Hathor, was known as 'the Nile Goose' or the 'Mother of the Golden Egg', according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*.

A VOCABULARY

her	literally means 'woman', as the Greek Goddess *Hera*
whore	'Old English *hore*; related to Old Norse *hora*…'
hoar	Cornish, 'sister'
houri	'1. in Muslim belief any of the nymphs of paradise: 2. any alluring woman'
hawra	Arabic, 'woman with dark eyes'
hoe	Afro-American, 'woman'
hoe	Hoe-ur is 'she who hoes', also reflected in the 'Old High German *houwa*, the German *haue*, and the Old French *houe*'.
hole	'Old English *hol*.' The river Hol flows into the Thames from Holborn at the north. Holborn is also pronounced 'Hoe burn', revealing its archaic relationship with Hoeur.
herb	Latin, 'grass, green plants'
herbage	'the vegetation of pastureland'
harrow	'any of various instruments used to level the ground'
horticulture	'Latin *hortus*, garden'
haughty	'*Archaic*. noble and exalted'
house	related to 'home', 'hotel', 'hostel', 'hovel' and 'howe'
howe	prehistoric burial mound in Scotland or northern England
Hawarden	Hawarden's Welsh name, Penarlag, means, literally, 'the summit of the ancient law', further revealing Hawar as a hill Goddess. This Kelto-Germanic mutation combines the Welsh *pen*, meaning 'top' or head', with the Swedish *arlag*. Like the German *Urlag*, this latter word means 'ancient law', and reminds us that the origins of modern world summit meetings began on these ancient law hills. Hawarden was clearly still a place of some power in the Iron Age, as Roman roads policed its area of influence most thoroughly.
hourd	Old French, 'palisade'; 'of German origin'
hoar frost	Old High German *Her* and Old English *har*
hoyden	'a wild boisterous girl; tomboy … perhaps from Middle Dutch *heidijn*'
hurricane	from the Spanish *huru*, or wind
horizon	'the apparent line that divides the earth and the sky'
hoary	'ancient or venerable'
ha	Breton, 'hag'
hao	Breton, 'ripe, mature'
hunweltat	Cornish, 'patriarch', literally a 'house dad'
hour	'from Old French *hore*, from Latin *hora*, from Greek SEASON'
heretic	'a person who maintains a belief contrary to the established teachings of the Church'
hose	literally 'Hoe's
hoard	'to gather or accumulate'
herd	'Old English *heord* … Gothic *hairda*, Old High German *herta*…'
horny	German *Hornatig*
hoy/hey	'a cry used to attract attention or drive animals'
horse	Old English *hors*
Ye Har!	Giddy up, horsey! Literally 'Y Hoeur!'
hoy	freight barge
ahoy	'Land Ho!'

BREE – AN ETYMOSOPHY

HER DIVINE DESCENDANTS

Bridget	Attempts to subdue Bridget meant that she was canonised more than once. A 10th-century CE compendium of old Irish terms and legends, known as *Cormac's Glossary*, described her as 'Bridgit the female sage … Brigit the goddess, whom poets adored, because her protecting care over them was very great and very famous'.
Bride	(Pronounced 'Breed'.) This is another ancient name of the Goddess commonly used by the early Catholic Church. Like Bridget, Bride also became Christianised as St. Bride.
Brimo	'The Raging One' was generally an aspect of the Goddess as Destroyer, though even she appeared as a Virgin Mother. According to Eithne Wilkins, in her book *The Rose Garden Game*, the feast of purification at Eleusis saw the advent of the Divine Child announced with calls of 'Holy Brimo has borne the Holy Child Brimus!'
Brizo	Note: An Aegean Moon Goddess, located in Delos and to whom votive ships were offered, according to Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*.
Britomartis	Note: Described in the *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology* as the Great Goddess of Bronze Age Crete and the Aegean Islands, Britomartis appears to have meant 'Sweet Virgin'. An early female ruler of Gaul also took the name Britomartis. Dr Robert Briffault's *The Mothers* suggests that she was perceived a queen embodying the True Goddess spirit. Britomartis is linked to Koeur in Olympian mythology, which claims that her mother was the Cretan virgin Carme, 'another form of Car, Car-Dia, Carmenta, Carna, etc.', according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
Brigantia	'The latinised form of Brigit's name, Brigantia, is found throughout Britain Europe. Brigantia was also the ancient realm which included neolithic Britain, Brittany and northern Spain.' (Kathy Jones, *The Ancient British Goddess*)

Primigenia	Note: Bree's link with Ver was seen in the Roman Goddess known as Fortuna Primigenia. Here was so fundamental a Goddess as to have been known as 'first-born daughter of Jove'. In her full name, or in the earlier Etruscan incarnation known simply as Primigenia, this Goddess holds obvious Bree origins far beyond the etymological. As a deity of childbirth, she was also a 'Goddess of female fruitfulness, god-mother; and protectress of child-bearing young mothers, and of the newly born' (Jacqueline Champeaux, 1982, p.40). Even Cicero recognised that Primigenia 'has been with us from our earliest moments'. At the Bree city of Praeneste, the Goddess also functioned as an oracle. She was worshipped in Roman after 192 BCE, when she inherited such ancient titles as 'The Firstborn Fortuna', 'Public Fortune' and 'The Fortune of State', revealing the high esteem in which she was held.
Priapus	Note: This was the Greek god of male procreative power and his statues wielded erect phalli half as long as the god himself.
Breaca	Note: Breaca was an associate of Bridgit and was known in Ireland and Cornwall. More curiously, the patron saint of Breage was Breaca's sister, Germoe.

A BRIEF VOCABULARY

pre-	'pre- *prefix*. before in time, rank, order, position … (from Latin *prae–*. from *prae*, before, beforehand, in front…'
abri	'a shelter or place of refuge'. Application of this word is seen at the prehistoric French caves Abri Blanchard and Abri Castanet, as well as the great temple of Avebury, which was even known to the Romans spelled as Abiri.
obry	Welsh, 'down below'
Abred	Druidic knowledge, literally 'O'Brid'
abrigo	Portuguese 'shelter, guard; covering, asylum'
abril	Spanish 'springtime'
abrileno	Spanish 'April'
bride	Old English *bryd*, Old High German *Brut*
breed	Old English *bredan*, of German origin, related to brood
breith	Gaelic, 'act of bearing … **a' breith uighean**, laying eggs'
pri	Breton, 'clay'
bry/pryi	Cornish, 'clay, earth'
breideag	Gaelic, 'a wife'
brigh	Gaelic (pronounced 'bree'), 'substance, essence, elixir, juice … pith, energy'
brain	The roots of this word appear to equate the covering skull with the enclosing physical protection of the belly; Old English *braegen*, Middle Low German *bregen*.
braid	'to interweave'
pregnant	timeless alternative 'preggers'
prick	'taboo slang word for penis' Old English *prica*; same roots as 'private parts' and 'pry'
bres	Cornish, 'judgement'
breg	Cornish, 'a breach'
prys	Cornish, 'time'
praise	'the act of expressing commendation'
pretty	Note: From Old Norse *prettugr*, meaning also 'cunning'.
bright	Scottish *bricht*
pray	'to utter prayers': also archaic *I beg you* and as preamble to conversation *Pray tell me…*
braid	'[Old English *bregdan* … weave together, compare Old Norse *bregtha*…]'
pryd	Welsh, 'beauty, form, time'
Prydeinig	Welsh, 'British'
Prydyn	Welsh, 'Scotland'
prydus	Welsh, 'beautiful, handsome'
prydydd	Welsh, 'poet'
prudd	Welsh, 'wise, true' (pronounced 'prith')
pryffaid	Welsh, 'perfect'; see Cerrig Pryffaid stone circle[G]
sprig	'compare Low German *Sprick*, Swedish *sprygg*'
spring	'[Old English *springan*; related to Old Norse *springa*…]'
spirit	from the Welsh *ysbrud* (pronounced 'us-Brid'), literally 'as Brid'
Prithivi	'the symbol of Earth in Hindu psychology', according to Israel Regardie in *The Complete Golden Dawn Book of Magic*
bris	Cornish, 'berry'
brenn	Cornish, 'supreme, royal'
breagh	Gaelic, 'handsome, beautiful'
breaghad	Gaelic, 'beauty, superiority in beauty'
brionn	Gaelic, 'prettiness'

BREE & BRIG IN NORSE MYTHOLOGY

Just as a spray or a sprig of holly was 'as Bree' or 'as Brig', so the Scandinavian Mother Goddess mutated into Freya and Frigg. The name of the former simply meant 'more free', and modern Midland pronunciation would nowadays still render the word 'frayer'. In mythology, whilst Freya was sexually free (in Swedish *fri*), Frigg embodied what have come to be accepted as classic aspects of the Mother Goddess. And though 'frig' is a marginalised sexual term, from which we also see the roots of 'friction', Frigg's reputation as the Great Mother has come, ironically, to mean that even 'prig' and 'frigid' come from Bridgit. The Scandinavian word-bridge of 'f/b'[1] is also reflected in the male god Fricco, best known for 'distributing peace and pleasure among men, whose idol is fashioned with a gigantic "priapus".'[2] Just as Freya and Frigg were the Norse Bree and Brig, so the male god Fricco was literally the 'Prick'. In Billington & Green's ***The Concept of the Goddess***, Stephen Grundy quotes the ancient scholar Tshan: 'If plague and famine threaten, a libation is poured to the idol Dorr; if war, to Wotan; if marriages are to be celebrated, to Fricco.'

1 The Scandinavian 'f/b' mutation is best seen in the modern relationship of 'friary' and 'priory'.

2 Britt-Mari Nasstrom, *Freyja – a Goddess with Many Names*

BREED

Bring forth from me, Briddy,
A breach so wide,
I love me a man,
And I'll so be his bride,
His prick in my brig
And so Preggers I'll be,
So breed up the child
and then breach it for me.

I'll braid up my pretty hair,
Braid up my bread,
And wait me there Pregnant
In Mother Breed's Bed.
Bring forth from me, Briddy,
Oh Bring Bring Bring,
Of a child at my Bree's tols
Sing Sing Sing.

MA – AN ETYMOSOPHY

HER DIVINE DESCENDANTS

Ma	The Great Goddess of Comana was 'worshipped by a whole people of hierodules in the ravines of the Taurus and along the banks of the Iris', according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
Mah	As a form of All Seeing Eye and Spirit of Truth, Mah was a primitive Moon Goddess, sometimes also known as Al-Mah, 'the Moon'
Maa	In Egypt, Maa was the fundamental 'maternal force'.
Maia	Robert Graves, in *The Greek Myths*, describes Maia as the mother of Hermes. She was also known as the grandmother.
Maat	This Egyptian Goddess of the All Seeing Eye was also known as Mut.
Mami	'Even in Babylonian periods there were prayers to Mami or Aruru as the creator of human life', according to Merlin Stone's *When God Was a Woman*.
Mammon	Vilified by Jesus Christ as a symbol of acquisitiveness, Mammon originally stood for great wealth, meaning knowledge. 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon' (Luke 16:13) alludes to the sheer magnificence of the Mother temples at a time when they had fallen into decadence. The Gospels thus demand that 'the temple of the great goddess … should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth' (Acts 19:27).
Ma-Nu	In Egypt, she symbolised the Primal Deep and was represented by three cauldrons, according to *The Book of the Dead*.
Ma-Bellona	This was the name of the Great Goddess in Anatolia.
Macha	A pre-Keltic Goddess worshipped in Ireland, also appearing in the Old Testament as Queen Maachah. Her spirit was worshipped in a grove until ousted and burnt by the Kidron Brook, by her son King Asa, according to *1 Kings 15:13*.
Mara	also known as Marsa. In her book *The Language of the Goddess*, Maria Gimbutas has written: 'One of the most archaic goddesses related to cows and milk preserved in folklore is the Marsa or Mara of Latvian mythological songs … called the Mother of Milk, the Mother of Cows, or the Old Shepherdess of Cows. Her own source of milk is a miraculous well… [She] appears in animal stalls as a black snake, bug, or a hen … brings fertility to cows; she is responsible for the easy birth of calves and an abundance of milk. If invoked, she can produce large supernatural cows with an inexhaustible source of milk, as well as good pasturelands.'
Madron	This British Goddess was 'the Mother of All, the bounteous Water of Life. Her Welsh name was Modron verch Avallach, which is said to indicate Madron's origins in Avalon as one of the original Nine Sisters said to preside over "the Isle of Apples".' (Kathy Jones, *The Ancient British Goddess*)
Matronit	a Hebrew version of the Mother Goddess
Mammetun	The Babylonians talked of the 'mother of destinies' or Mammetun: she who formed the first human beings out of clay.
Te Mut	Te Mut emerged from Tiamat, 'the Sumero-Babylonian "Goddess Mother" (*Dia Mater*), from whose formless body the universe was born at creation', according to Barbara G. Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
Qis Mah	This Arabian version of the Moon Goddess as Fate, was corrupted into 'kismet' by the Turks.

A VOCABULARY

Oma	German, 'grandmother, granny'
amma	Swedish: 'I {wet-} nurse; II *tr* nurse, suckle; feed'
mam	'mother' in Welsh, Irish, Cornish, and in Breton *Mamm*
mama	Spanish 'mommy, mom, mamma'
mama	Portuguese 'mama, female breast, udder, teat'
mamaidh	Gaelic, 'mamma'
marry	'to take (someone as someone's husband or wife) in marriage'
matrimony	'from *mater*, mother'
maternal	'the substance of which a thing is made, or composed'
mate	'1. the sexual partner of an animal; 2. a marriage partner'
ma	French, 'my'
ma!	Breton exclamation, 'Good!'
maouez	Breton, 'female'
mat	Cornish, 'good'
mat	'Old English *matte*; related to Old High German *matta*'
matron	'a middle-aged woman with children'
matrix	'obsolete: the womb'
matern	The maternal roots of this Cornish word for king suggests matrilinear beginnings.
mamma	Tartar, 'earth
mamona	Aramaic, 'wealth'
mamaloi	'The divine implications of the syllable Ma are recognized only in obscure semi-magical cults like voodooism, where a priestess embodies the Goddess's spirit and is known as *mamaloi* or *mambo*.' (Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*)
Amazons	'They were nomadic horsewomen/warriors, and it was said of them that they detested men so much that when they wanted to conceive they would kidnap men, impregnate themselves, and then kill the poor victim – rather like black widow spiders.' (Carolyne Larrington, *The Woman's Companion to Mythology*)
asthma	imitative; to breathe hard as though in childbirth
smatter	The term 'a smattering of knowledge' originally meant a general or overall knowledge. Its 'Jack of All Trades' implications are not similar to the Old Wives' Tale, which is nowadays caustically dismissed as archaic fancy.
marr	Breton, 'type of hoe'
marvel	Breton, 'mortal'
mad	Cornish, 'good'
mathair	Gaelic, 'mother'
maoth	Gaelic, 'tender, soft'
masach	Gaelic, 'large-hipped female'

Ver rising

Though Ver almost certainly began as a Water Goddess, it seems that she was so central to ancient culture that she also took on the roles of Fertility Goddess, Fire Goddess and Life Giver. For Ver was the 'verve' of life, and the Ancients simply repeated the name of their Great Goddess twice over, as 'Ver-Ver', in order to show their love of life, or 'fervour'. As the Fertility Goddess, Ver manifested in the vulva, the virgin, in virility and in birth. Ver was the Goddess of Virtue, yet Marija Gimbutas tells us that: 'In Aargau, Germany, women believed they would become pregnant by bathing in the spring of Verena.'[5] Ver's fur coat warmed the animals all the year round, whilst the bracken and 'fern' warming the Mother Earth's hills were all 'furze', or 'Ver's'. There is a famous statue of Artemis as the Many-Breasted Goddess, but it seems that it was actually Ver, in her natural role as the Fir Cone, the legendary mother of Dionysus,[6] who first played that role. In the form of the Fir Cone, with its hundreds of breast-like conical protrusions and rounded pear shape, it seems that Mother Nature actually designed the Fertility Goddess-prototype in advance of Humanity.

In Latin, *ver* was the spring and *verax* was the Truth. To make an oath to the Great Goddess Ver was 'to aver'. And though it may be coincidence, the temple at the beginning of the Avebury ceremonies, known as the Sanctuary,[G] is situated on Overton Hill. Ignoring the later Saxon *ton*, which simply means 'farm', it is certainly conceivable that the original dedication of this Neolithic hill temple was O'Ver. There is another large Neolithic temple complex on the Cornish Dinnever Hill, on Bodmin Moor. Dinnever, which means 'Hill O'Ver', is home to the Stannon stone circle[G] and the intriguing King Arthur's Hall,[G] whilst the low stones of Fernacre[G] rise one mile to the east. There is also an Aberdeenshire stone circle known as Tomenaverie,[G] which could mean both 'Mound of the Faeries' or 'Mound of Ver'. Intriguingly, the legends of the faerie-folk as quiet, peace-loving and suspicious of iron and new religions matches the descriptions of the Neolithic agriculturists in their reaction to the coming brutalities of the Bronze Age. Perhaps, as they slid further into our collective memories, the people of Ver did indeed become the faeries – remembered only hazily as those who still inhabited the mounds.

Ver the Water Goddess

Archaeologists believe that by the Neolithic period people were travelling up to ninety miles per day on large eight-seater river canoes[7] between Yorkshire and Northern Ireland via the Cumbrian stone-axe factories and the Isle of Man. For these people, Ver the Water Goddess preceded even the Fire Goddess, setting herself down somewhere in the mists of the Stone Ages. To the Neolithics all the rivers were dedicated to Ver, and each was called *a'vern* (in Breton *aven* and in Welsh *afon*, pronounced 'avvon'). There are still six sacred rivers known just as the Avon or 'River'. The southernmost Avon flows into the English Channel at Christchurch, on the Dorset coast, while the northernmost Avon flows into the Spey at Inverness, at the entrance to the Highlands of Scotland.[8] The mouths of all Breton and Welsh rivers are also dedicated to Ver, and called *abers*, or 'a'vers', whilst in the Shetland Isles, every river mouth is known as a voe, as in the infamous Sullom Voe oil terminal. An actual river known as the Ver rises in southern England, at Redbourn in Hertfordshire.

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[5] Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*

[6] Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*

[7] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

[8] *Avon the first river*, rising west of Sherston, in Wiltshire, flows through Bath and Bristol to join the Severn at Avonmouth. It is navigable to Bristol for large vessels and is tidal all the way to Swineford. *Avon the second river* rises on the border of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, near South Kilworth. It flows generally south-west through Rugby, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Evesham and Pershore, again joining the Severn at Tewkesbury, in Gloucestershire. *Avon the third river* is a Devon river and rises on Dartmoor, flowing generally south into Bigbury Bay, north-west of Thurlestone. *Avon the fourth river* rises in the fertile plain called the Vale of Pewsey. It flows south past the great Neolithic henge at Marden, continues past the even larger henge at Durrington Walls, past Old Sarum and Salisbury, through Fordingbridge and Ringwood, and thence into Christchurch harbour. *Avon the fifth river* rises three miles south of Falkirk, in central Scotland, flowing west towards Cumbernauld and changing its course many times

The only ancient ways across the river were by ferry or by a ford, which both reveal Ver roots (as late as 1304 CE, Barford St. Martin in Wiltshire was still spelled 'Berevord'). A Scots water-crossing is a firth, having mutated from the original British *ffordd*. The dictionary claims the Norwegian *fjord* as a relative of both the 'firth' and 'ford', adding that the fjords were 'formed by glacial action'. This process was created by the Water Goddess and is called a 'firn', which is 'a mass of porous ice formed from snow, that has not yet become frozen into glacier ice … a snowfield at the head of a glacier that becomes transformed to ice', as the *Collins English Dictionary* defines it. The firn is also linked with 'the Old High German *Firni*, "old" '. In parts of the north of England, a waterfall is still a 'force' – from the Old Norse *fors*. In Welsh, Ver's ferry becomes *fferi*, whilst the German ferryman is known poetically as a *Ferge*. Our final evidence of Ver as the Water Goddess is found in Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths*, where the Ver connections continue with Phorcys, whom Graves called a 'wise old man of the sea', and his three daughters, a manifestation of the Triple Goddess known as the Phorcydes.

Ver the Fire Goddess

As the Fire Goddess,[9] Ver gave her name to the furnace, the forge[10] and the oven, or 'o'vern'. In ancient Cornwall, the tribes of the Kernow situated at the Land's End continued to commune with the Great Goddess Ver until late into the Iron Age. Fires were lit in her underground sweatlodges or fogous, and right up until the 20th century there are tales of witches and terrifying white ladies being witnessed within the fogou chambers, which testifies to their continuing associations with the Great Goddess. Ver's fire manifests in the French *feu*, the German *Feuer*, the Old Norse *furr* and even the Greek *pur*. But, most curiously, the apparently similar roots of the word 'burn', or the Old English *beornan*, are also related to the Old Norse *brenna* and the Gothic *brinnan*, which clearly show roots in Bree. This migration of sounds has also been noted in the supposed Ver spelling of the Wiltshire village of Burcombe. The village was known as Bredecumbe in 1086, and as Brydancume in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, suggesting that the two sounds 'bur' and 'bree' may have been interchangeable throughout early history and prehistory. This is further supported by the Collins dictionary's second definition of Bridgit, which reads: 'also called Birgitta'. Saint Birgitta was a 'Swedish nun and visionary; patron saint of Sweden'. Most strangely, the etymological link between Ver and Bree is nowadays mirrored in the modern city of Birmingham and its slang name Brum!

Ver becomes Wer

In the spring of 1997 CE my dear friend the Goddess writer Gyrus told me about Verbeia, a Romano-British Goddess dedicated to the river Wharfe in North Yorkshire. That the Wharfe/Werf could have utilised Verbeia/Ver as its dedicated Goddess intrigued me and revealed the relaxed

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as it passes through Avonbridge and Linlithgow, finally joining the Firth of Forth between Grangemouth and Bo'ness. ***Avon the sixth and last river*** rises in the Grampian region, high in the Cairngorm mountains. From there, the river runs east through Loch Avon and Glen Avon, turns north to Tomintoul and travels down Strath Avon to meet the Spey at Ballindalloch Castle, where stand the three Clava cairns of Marionburgh and Upper & Lower Lagmore.

Note a: Auan (pronounced 'A'wern') – The Cornish also called the river by this derivative of 'avon'.

Note b: Besides the six rivers of Avon, there are also six other Scottish rivers which retain this name in the Gaelic spelling Abhainn (pronounced 'Avvahn'). These are the Abhainn an t-Srathain in Sutherland, the Abhainn Dalach in Strathclyde, Abhainn Duibhe in Tayside, Abhainn Gaoire also in Tayside, the Abhainn na Coinnich in the Highland district of Lochaber and finally the Abhainn Righ, also in Lochaber.

[9] 'Fire' has this dictionary note: 'Old English *fyr*; related to Old Saxon *fiur*, Old Norse *furr*, Old High German *fuir*; Greek *pur*.'

[10] In William Borlase's *Cornish–English Vocabulary* of 1754, a 'forge' is a *foge* – 'a blowing-house for smelting of tin'. The Cornish *forn* means 'oven'.

nature of the Ancients' attitude to word-play. In modern terms, it was no more than the British saying 'Volks-waggen' to the Germans' 'Folksvahgen', but more wide-reaching implications became apparent when I discovered a very obvious Ver/Wer connection linking Gaelic with the Germanic languages: I discovered that the Gaelic for 'man' was *fir* and that the Latin was *vir*, but that this same word in Old English was *wer*. It quickly became apparent that Ver, both on her own and as Wer, had been made masculine, possibly during the first power-struggles of the Bronze Age.

The concept of Ver as the Latin spring evoked a sense of change, seen in the word *vertere*, 'to turn', as shown in the 'turn of the wheel of the year'. This is reflected in Ver's 'furrow', which is 'literally: a turning of the plough'. But it was a darker, more ominous and apparently more recent power which twisted that notion of 'turning' until the new *versus* literally meant 'in opposition to'. The Ver Cone Goddess of Spring had mutated into the Vir of Virility, the adult male, now 'capable of copulation or procreation' and increasingly aware of his new position. As Wer, fundamentally patriarchal words such as 'war', 'werewolf' and 'warlock' appeared to have been imposed later alongside the more ancient Water Goddess words such as the English 'weir', 'wharf' and 'whirlpool', and the Welsh *wern*, which means 'swamp'.

That the Great Goddess had been misappropriated to serve under the banner of war came as no surprise, for I knew that, by the Bronze Age, the Irish Goddess Badb had actually given her name to the 'battle', and taken the names 'Goddess of Battle' and Battle Terror'.[11] Perhaps it was the coming of ever more dangerous bronze and iron weapons which ensured that the tribes would chose Ver/Wer as their ultimate symbol of battle. She became, literally, their Wer or War Goddess. Wer protected her 'warriors' and covered them in a Wer-paint called woad, or in German *Waid*. As Ver, she drove her soldiers into a 'fury', and caused them to 'feud', as in the German *Fehde*. But as time passed and the power of the Patriarchy began to grow, so the axis of Ver/Wer grew ever more masculine. In Armenia, the national god of war was Vahagn and his early Ver beginnings ensured that he 'was popular enough not to share the fate of lesser deities, whom the Persian gods replaced…'[12] But, as we are beginning to see, the fall of the Goddess cultures took millennia to complete and was so slow at first as to have been barely perceptible.

Some erstwhile conclusions

The most important aspect of the rediscovery of Ur is the manner in which it now unites various European prehistoric pasts and shows them to have been practically linked. Over the past century, the irritatingly generic term 'Kelt' has been applied to so many varying aspects of prehistory and New Age research that it has lost much of its original power. Reconciling this with the divided strands of the Classical Greek, the Roman, the Scandinavian and the Germanic seems almost as important as the rediscovery of the names of the Neolithic Goddess. For it undercuts our present prehistoric overview by such an age that we may finally at least glimpse the Bigger Picture. It now makes sense that the Irish Fergal is almost the Greek Virgil, or that the Breton stones at Kerfily have the same root as the Welsh Caerphilly Castle. For to understand the code is to break through thousands of years of roaring silence, and finally disarm the critics who love to claim: 'The history of ideas begins with writing: there is not and never can be a history of prehistoric thought.'[13]

And, even better, we can now divine the names of many Stone Age monuments which had supposedly been lost for thousands of years, but which probably were, in truth, always on the tip of the tongue of some unobliging local.

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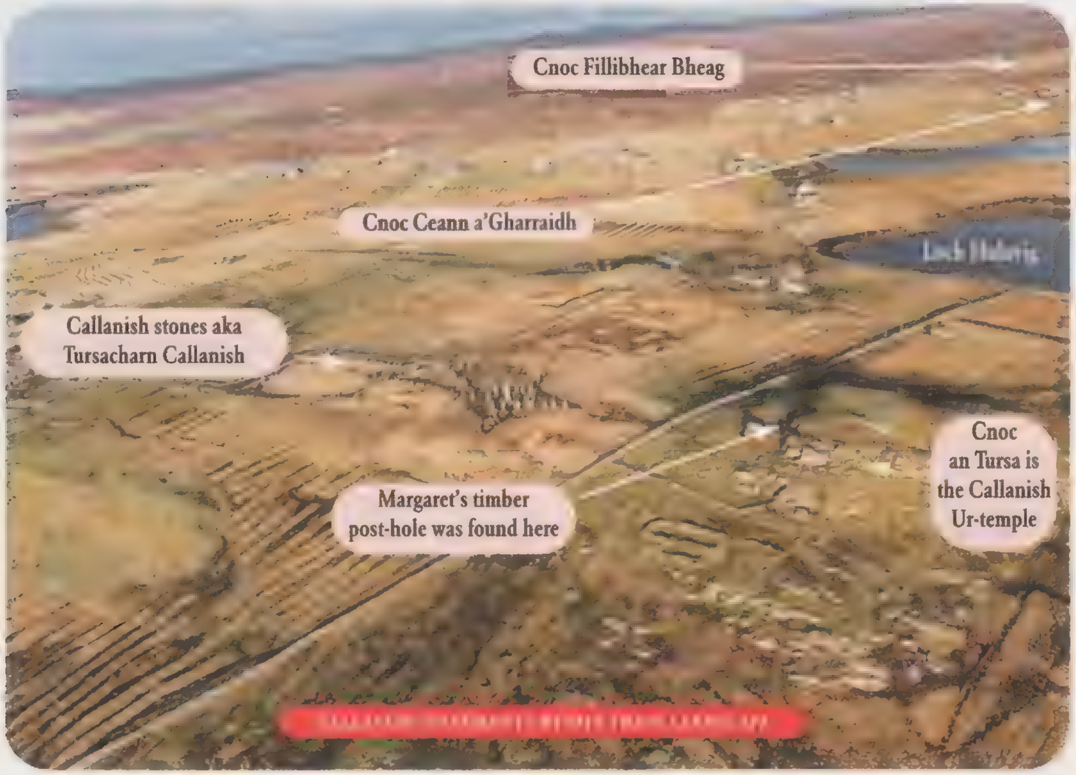
[11] Sandra Billington & Miranda Green, *The Concept of the Goddess*

[12] Arthur Cotterell, *A Dictionary of World Mythology*

[13] Glyn Daniel, *A Hundred Years of Archaeology*

Callanish stones

BELOW: It is the Lewissian gneiss, with its seemingly endless permutations of colours, and its veins of quartz and hornblende, which makes every stone at Callanish into a self-illuminating masterpiece.


Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag
Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh
Loch Hulavig
Callanish stones aka Tursacharn Callanish
Cnoc an Tursa is the Callanish Ur-temple
Margaret's timber post-hole was found here

CHAPTER

SIX

Margaret at the Stones: Megalithic Astronomy at Lunar Callanish

'...the specialist who starts out by learning what everybody else has done before him is not likely to initiate anything very new.'

CHARLES H. HAPGOOD, *MAPS OF THE ANCIENT SEA KINGS*

'...surmises on the interconnection of such [megalithic] sites ... is more for the visionary than the archaeologist.'

AUBREY BURL, *THE STONE CIRCLES OF THE BRITISH ISLES*

The cross of Eilean Bride

At midsummer midnight in the Outer Hebrides, or Her Brides, the sky is still radiant and abuzz with blue. A clear night's afterglow will send southern pilgrims out to the stones on the rocky promontory of Callanish, to watch and wait, for these stones are most alive when they are attended to.

Legend has it that in the days before the oceans rose, there was a great island stretching all the way from the northern tip or Butt of Lewis down though Harris, North and South Uist to Barra, creating one enormous super-isle known as Eilean Bride (pronounced 'Eileen Breed') – the Isle of Bride, or Bridgit.

This legend is somewhat supported by the inimitable construction of the northern islands. For Lewis, Harris and North Uist are all of the same freak rock creation called Lewissian gneiss, a crystal so faceted as to make walking in the north of Lewis on a moonlit night feel akin to fetching up on Mars. And the area around the Callanish stones[G] resounds to the name of Bree or Bridgit. At Breasclete, or 'Bree's Rock', one mile to the north, the remains of a destroyed chambered cairn stands on the Cnoc a'Prionnsa, or 'Hill of the Prince'.[1] This meaningless translation was clearly an attempt by antiquaries to back-form a name on to what they perceived as the tomb of some great man. But before their false restoration, the name would more likely have been the simpler Cnoc a'Pri (or O'Bree), literally the 'Hill O'Bridgit'.

To the north of Breasclete, the Bridgit mountain Beinn Bragar rises, its name the same Scottish mutation as the Ring of Brogar or Brodgar[2] on the Orkney Mainland. In the northern lea of the mountain is Bragar village, and there is another Bridgit neighbour four miles to its north at Brue, echoing the relationship of Glastonbury's river and mounds.

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[1] Margaret and Gerald Ponting, *New Light on the Stones of Callanish*

[2] Ring of Brogar or Brodgar is at 7. c) 8

In the Outer Hebrides, Bride also manifested in her ancient Scandinavian guise as Brüd, and names such as Callanish and Hulavig are powerful for their simplicity. The Isle of Lewis is currently enduring a peculiar and enforced Keltic revival, in which its local artists have set up a tenuous link with Carnac in Brittany, and all local names are being forced into those deadly and protracted Gaelic spellings which appear to exist only to exclude the uninitiated.

I first saw Callanish stones...

When I first saw Callanish stones in a book at the end of 1990 CE, I flipped out. The monochrome aerial shot presented a 5,000-year-old monument with a skewed Keltic cross as its ground plan. After a flurry of research, I soon found myself 850 miles away from home driving on a road out of Stornaway, the capital of Lewis, in a Hebridean downpour of considerable intensity. Mid-March on Lewis is a wild time and the constant peat growth ensures that civilisation has not been allowed to merge with the landscape. Instead, pebble-dashed pre-fabs perch untidily upon the topsoil as though their licence to not be blown away will be revoked at any moment. Similarly, the Lewis roads give the impression of having been laid directly on top of the peat, and drivers who takes their eyes off the road for a second find themselves in deep and dangerous gulleys.

A full half-hour out of Stornaway sees the traveller's jaw drop as the great stones of Callanish appear directly on the low horizon. And so magnetic is the pull of Callanish that barely a comment is made about the two large stone rings which the main road passes close by, near the waters of Loch Roag. Were this any other place, both of these circles would be worthy of a long day's journey, but the final rush to Callanish is everything...

That first time at Callanish, I sat psychically pole-axed outside the entrance. For forty minutes I could not enter the stones, so I sat there in disbelief. Their jewels twinkled at me and mesmerised me until I took out my fieldnote book and wrote a long, rambling and wholly unpublishable poem. The impact of a cruciform such as this was so resonant within me that Callanish would soon became symbolic for many different reasons. Its sheer distance from home enabled the sense of pilgrimage to feel more complete than travelling almost anywhere else, whilst the ground-plan cross resounded truthfully to my modern British ears, infested as they were with the daily news of deaths caused by Protestants v. Catholics. I had discovered so many pre-Christian crosses these past months that I was on a mission,[3] and the aerial photograph of Callanish had been the inspiration for that mission.

Over the next couple of days, I visited the three other 'satellite' circles strewn around Loch Roag and each was of an extraordinary nature. The Lewissian gneiss created great sweeps and curves of colour in the stones, such ebbs and flows of crystalline exactness that each and every menhir became a personality in its own right. Closest to the main site was Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh (pronounced 'Krawk Kee-an a'Gary'),[G] now a megalithic horseshoe due to the destruction of the circle's south-westerly side. The tall stones were gloriously clean and remarkably shaped. The largest stone, a huge Goddess triangle, shot from the ground like a sabre sharp enough to cut silk and, like the main site, Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh was built at the beginning of a low rocky outcrop or promontory of stone. Just 300 yards to its east stood the elevated Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag (pronounced 'Krawk Filli-Ver Veg'),[G] a dramatic site described as a destroyed double-concentric stone circle. Yet the 'missing' stones of the inner ring had apparently been removed so precisely as to have left no evidence of stone holes, and certainly no fragments of those

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[3] Some examples: the ankh, the swastika, the Byzantine cross, the Jewish Tau cross, Wotan's cross, the Tetrascele, the Lunate, the Gammadion of Troy, the Assyrian crosses Potent and Pommee, and finally the Keltic cross, known to the Hindus as the Kiakra – a sign of sexual union.

At Callanish centre, within its towering but tiny circle, the stones look and feel as light as balsa.

TOP: Another view of the inner circle, looking north up the long avenue.
ABOVE: Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh stands half a mile from the Callanish stones, also on the banks of Loch Hulavig.

TOP: Of all these circles, it is Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag which has the most vast and uninterrupted view of 'Sleeping Beauty'.
ABOVE: Unlike the other Lewissian circles, the tall hoary stones of Ceann Hulavig are often ignored or unknown to travellers.

former stones. But even in the chronic March rain, the overwhelming beauty of the Lewissian gneiss astounded me and the character of each and every upright stone at Fillibhear Bheag was, again, suffused with an unrestricted brilliance.

And so it was with the same unabated enthusiasm that I journeyed the three miles to the head of Loch Hulavig to the south where, high above the water, stood the giants of the Ceann Hulavig circle.[G] These stones presented an entirely different aspect to my Hebridean trip, for the bright crystals of Callanish were here hoary and overgrown with a thick mid-green lichen. At the centre of the circle was an opened megalithic kist, in land so boggy as to sink the traveller knee-deep in moments. Yet, in my deeply moved and mystical state, Hulavig circle seemed enriched by this ultra-clean air of mystery and I searched below the lichen to discover the same, now-muted, Lewissian gneiss shot through with great bolts of white quartz.

A description of Callanish

On the final day of my first visit to Lewis, my travelling companions were busy enough to leave me alone at the main temple for eight long daylight hours. It rained intensely for each one of those hours, but I sat upon the Cnoc an Tursa (pronounced 'Krawk an Tursa') – the great natural outcrop of rock at the south end of the site – and wrote long notes and gazed endlessly at my surroundings. The Callanish circle was unlike any other – its thirteen closely-placed longstones were extremely tall, yet slight as the sun-bleached bones of some huge extinct animal. And within this circular compound, evidently at some later time, megalithic Humanity had somehow managed to squeeze a small chambered cairn into the space between the centre stone and those uprights on the eastern arc of the circle.

After the depredations at other Stone Age sites, Callanish was the most perfect ancient temple a traveller could wish for. Its stones were almost all in their original places and had suffered little of the false restoration that so many of the very greatest megalithic sites had borne at the cavalier hands of previous well-meaning antiquaries of the Victorian period. Indeed, this small and overtly Low Church Christian community had had no real idea of the importance of Callanish until after October 1857. For until that time, this magnificent cruciform, with its epic centre stone and long avenues, had been submerged beneath five feet of peat which had, over the millennia, crept higher and higher, especially around the stones of the main circle, to give the impression of a wonderfully elfin temple with avenues leading to its centre upon a small hillock. Some of the peat-grown stones of the Callanish avenue appeared as tiny as those mysterious stone rows on Dartmoor and, at just ten feet tall, even the great Callanish centre stone seemed slender and comparatively insignificant, for just eighteen miles away to the north stood the twenty-feet high Clach an Trushal,[G] the tallest standing stone in all of Scotland.

That this Callanish hillock was merely the encroachment of thousands of years of peat growth caused great surprise to the Victorians, not least to Sir James Matheson, the new owner of the island, who had instigated the digging. And it was for this reason that Callanish would be called a restored site for many decades after the peat's removal. Illustrations of the site up to twenty years later continued to show the two-toning on the stones caused by the effects of the peat, but Callanish had been saved and, as one of the most symbolic sacred sites of the ancient world, would never have to feel the same pressure borne by such unluckily situated monuments as Avebury and Stonehenge.

As I prepared to leave the Hebrides the next morning I knew I should have to return as soon as possible, for the significance of Callanish had caused another flurry of unreadable poetry. And I had picked up an old book called *The Stones around Callanish* by a couple called Margaret and Gerald Ponting. The book referred to a supposed hill formation called Cailleach na Mointeach or 'the Old Woman of the Moors', which I had not been able to pick out in the March downpours – a series of distant hills at the far south apparently created the effect of a woman lying on her back along the distant horizon. It was a famous local phenomenon visible only in the Callanish area, for beyond the views from that north-west coast, the foreshortening of perspective caused the range of hills to lose their 'humanising' poetry.

Margaret and Gerald Ponting claimed that all of the stones around Callanish had once been part of a gigantic megalithic lunar observatory in which the clever positioning of the stones had allowed all kinds of optical and psychological tricks to be played on the pilgrims on specific days of the year. I had already read about this 'archaeo-astronomy' as it was termed, but had found previous writers so obscure that I constantly bleeped out anything which I could not comprehend, until my overloaded brain would have found more understanding in an intravenous drip of Morse code. But the Pontings' diagrams and explanations rang with a vibrancy and wonder which I quickly felt a deep affinity for. And as a mystic myself, caught in this new web of possibilities, I was most impressed by the expression of sheer wonder on the faces of the two authors on the back of their Callanish book. In the busy year that followed I constantly stared at that photograph for, better even than a picture of the stones themselves, it resounded with the same true Callanish spirit as had also appeared to me.

In awe of Margaret Curtis

A little over one year later, I returned to Callanish with my family. We stayed at the greatest holiday cottage in the British Isles, owned by Anne and Angus Smith, who live close by. 'Creagan' has views quite beyond any prehistorian's dreams, and from the lounge/kitchen window, the avenues of Callanish ride the low horizon like a ridge-backed porcupine in silhouette. Walk a few paces to the other kitchen window and Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh is visible down at the dark water's edge of Loch Roag. Only the Smiths' own house blocks the view to Fillibhear, which can be seen by walking an exhausting(!) twenty yards. With this proximity to the stones, we soon saw 'the Old Woman of the Moors'. She was a magical phenomenon and far more impressive than any photograph could do justice to. With her knees, breasts, body and face all in gentle recumbent perspective, 'the Old Woman of the Moors', or 'Sleeping Beauty', as the locals call her, declared her influence at every one of the Callanish sites.

Then we met Margaret Ponting. She looked just the same as her photograph, but eight long years had passed since then and she was by now Margaret Curtis. The pressures of this micro-community and the endless archaeo-astronomy books and papers had ruined her marriage to Gerald Ponting who, shell-shocked, had returned to the conurbations of the south, where the rumblings of the great Earth Spirit were more easily blocked out. Their divorce had been a bitter and protracted affair and Margaret had married her main co-researcher, G. Ron Curtis, a dear man sixteen years older than herself.

Ron Curtis was to become more than just a steadying influence on Margaret. He was a vital combination of aesthetic Edinburgh intellectual and practical, hard-headed scientist. Ron's thirty years as a civil engineer had seen him supervising the safety of eighty-four major Scottish dams, whilst he was the foremost authority on the 18th-century military roads built by the loathsome General Wade. Widely respected in many different fields, it was G. Ron Curtis whose practical understanding of megalithic geometry had discovered the lost stone holes of the great Orcadian stone circle at Stenness, during Graham Ritchie's 1973 excavations.

For Ron was an exponent of the theories of the Scotsman Alexander Thom, the Emeritus Professor of Engineering at Oxford University who, in 1967, had set the archaeological establishment alight with his claims that the specific positioning of standing stones and circles throughout Britain was due to their intended use as megalithic astronomical observatories. Similar claims had been made before by such giants of science as Sir Norman Lockyer, the discoverer of helium, who, in 1901, claimed that the midsummer sun rose right down the line of the Stonehenge Avenue. And even as early as 1846, the Reverend E. Duke, vicar of Amesbury near Stonehenge, had claimed that 'Astronomy, as a science, took an early precedence, and those, whom at this day we account barbarians, possessed a knowledge, at which we ought worthily to wonder and admire.'[4]

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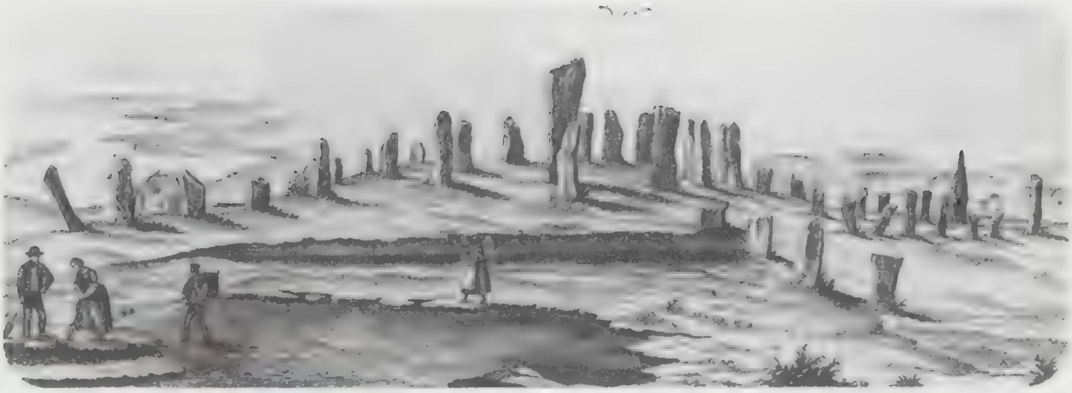
[4] Reverend E. Duke, ***Druidical Temples of Wiltshire***



ABOVE: This antiquarian print shows Callanish when the stones were still covered in five feet of peat growth. The peat, which was only removed in 1857, helped to save Callanish from otherwise certain premature destruction. © RCAHMS

LEFT: G. Ron Curtis at the Clach an Trushal.

BELOW: 'Sleeping Beauty' seen from the Breasclete/Callanish area.

BOTTOM: At Hulavig, Sleeping Beauty appears cradled between two hills.

But no-one before had backed up their controversial claims with such fastidious fieldwork as [illegible] of Alexander Thom. For between the 1930s [illegible] the 1960s, Thom had hawked his specially-modified theodolite across miles of boggy moor[illegible] to over 450 sites. His theories were met with a general incomprehension by most prehistorians who, as the archaeologist Aubrey Burl wrote, either 'accepted [them] genuflectionally ... as the rediscovered key to the decoding of stone circles'[5] or merely waited for this unwanted 'statistical blip' to fade away as mysteriously as it had appeared.

But not so for G. Ron Curtis. As a civil engineer, Ron had regularly surveyed using his full-size theodolite and his practical experience in the field allowed him to comprehend the might of Alexander Thom's assertions. And in the seven long years since Margaret's last book of discoveries had been published,[6] she had, through Ron's influence and teaching, become so steeped in the practical theories of Alexander Thom that her own work had become even more enriched by this new seam of knowledge opening up to her, regularly corresponding with Thom himself until the old man died. And so it was a very different Margaret whom we encountered at the stones that summer's day in 1992 CE. She was as visionary and as wonderful as we could have dreamed but, with the help of G. Ron Curtis, that vision was being applied to provable and repeatable phenomena – stones had particular jobs within the Callanish complex and Margaret was slowly decoding them all.

But though Margaret had turned Callanish and its related monuments into a megalithic test case, she still had no true idea of her world position or even the way in which her interpretations could be applied to other sites. In fact, Margaret had very little idea or even much interest in other British sites, having arrived in Callanish with her young family in 1973 only because she and Gerald Ponting had been fearful of the way in which city life was going. Gerald had found a teaching job at the Nicolson Institute in Stornaway and the house in Callanish had just happened to be for sale. She told us her story as though serendipity had had no say at all, but she was a certified Mensa cardholder and part of me believed her earnest assertion that caring for sea birds would have made her just as happy.

After that first day in the field, I returned addle-brained to Creagan and slept the dreamless sleep of the Ancients. Next morning, I awoke feeling incredibly invigorated and wrote:

7.45 a.m. July 2nd 1992 CE: 'Creagan', Callanish, Isle of Lewis: My notes after a first day in the field with Margaret Curtis. She is the Maria Reiche of Callanish – her theories, her intuitions, all the vision and knowledge that has come to pass through her – it's incredible... She worried about how we felt at Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag and the Bernera Bridge site, and her fears suggested very extreme personal happenings for her. The main site was a joyous riot through the stones, including moments when she described find[ing] the outermost stone of the short eastern wing of the cruciform and the tip of the furthest avenue stone... It was all vision-stuff, disguised as research and luck. Of course, I spent all day yesterday explaining (very forcefully) my theories on vision and trance, and how of course Margaret is a natural for all this.

Still unaware of G. Ron Curtis at this time, we invited Margaret to dinner at Creagan that night and attempted to learn everything first hand, by which time it was becoming clear just how superior this woman's intuition was. In simple terms, Margaret had decoded Callanish and all of its satellite circles and standing stones. But unlike most scientific discoveries, which rely on endless reams of printed statistics and a good deal of ignoring data which does not fit the theory, Margaret's discoveries were so practical that she could stand at the various sacred sites and explain everything with clarity and quiet force. And what made all this even more extraordinary was the reluctance with which Margaret had made her discoveries. As a scientist from a purely rationalist background, her earliest researches had taken place in an attempt to disprove all this astronomical lunacy. Yet, as the years rolled along, where Margaret had come to mock she had now remained to pray.

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[5] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

[6] Margaret and Gerald Ponting, *New Light on the Stones of Callanish*

Decoding astronomical Callanish 1

Sprung up around Callanish at the head of Loch Roag and out on to the high peaty terraces, the standing stones of twinkling Lewissian gneiss assumed unlikely positions to Margaret's modern eyes. But something resounded within her which discerned a pattern gradually unfolding at all those sites, and it was clearly the same mysticism which had inspired William Blake to write: 'I look through the eye, not with it.' For example, at the main site the stones were not built at the end of the high promontory known as the Cnoc an Tursa. Instead, they were positioned some way back down the ridge so that, to the pilgrim standing in the long avenue, the Cnoc an Tursa's rocky massif would always loom up through the focal point within the tall shallow circle of standing stones. Similarly, at Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh the circle is placed undramatically midway along a ridge, which leads to another wild promontory reaching out to the water. Fillibhear, just 300 yards away, stands at an even more elevated position with an even more dramatic rocky promontory at the ridge's end. To Margaret, it seemed that the orientation led naturally towards the outcrop from the stone circle and, curiously, this same southern orientation pointed directly to Sleeping Beauty.

But not every site was built in this manner. When Margaret went up to the hoary circle stones of Ceann Hulavig she looked for Sleeping Beauty and was shocked. From here, two nearby hills appeared to enfold the recumbent Goddess like a baby in her cot. And if Margaret walked more than a few yards outside the diameter of the stones then the phenomenon was destroyed.

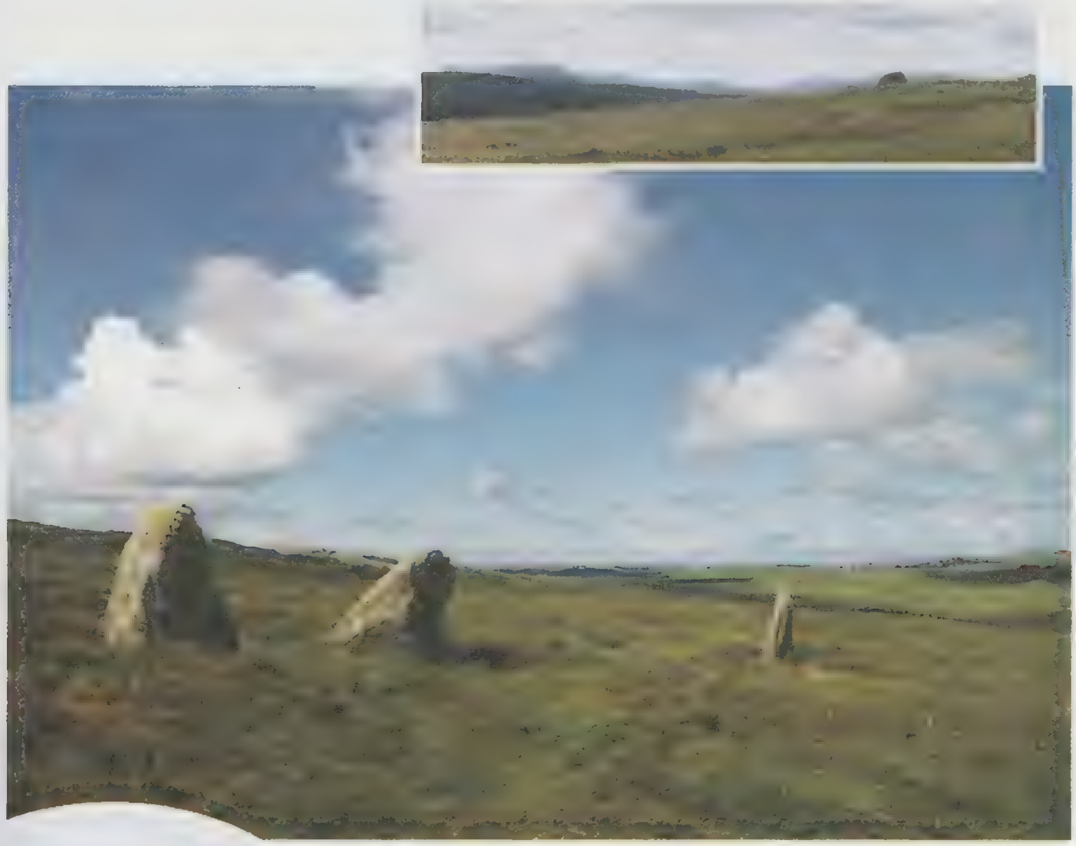
Across the road, at the strange small stone alignment called Airigh nam Bidearan (pronounced 'Aa-ree nam Bidge-ya-ran'), the main part of Sleeping Beauty's body was hidden and just the 'knees' were clearly visible on this shallow south-orientated hillside. But if the 'knees' alone were visible, then it was to those 'knees' which the Ancients had once more orientated their alignment of stones. And no matter how different each individual site may have been, everywhere Margaret went the psychological game was the same – directing the unwitting pilgrim to address Sleeping Beauty, 'the Old Woman of the Moors'.

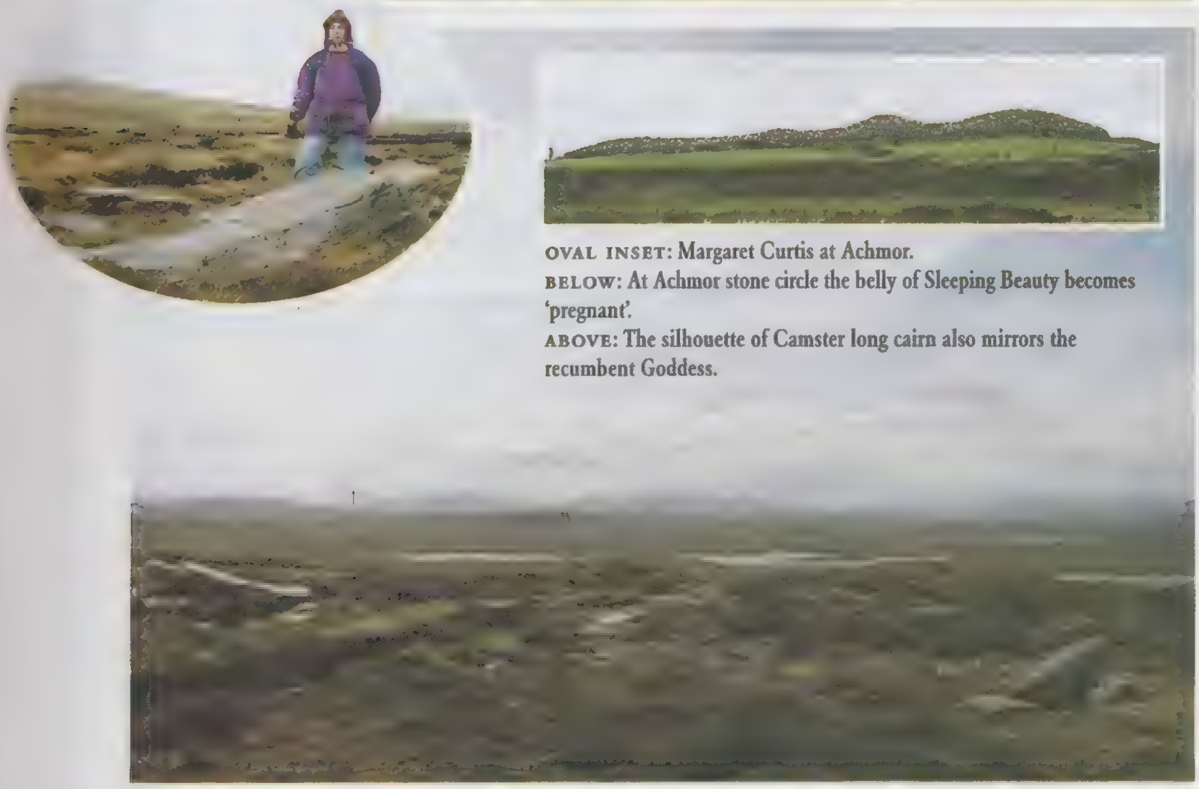
Then, in May 1981, Margaret learned of the discovery of a stone circle on the broad shelf above the modern inland community of Achmor, about seven miles south of Callanish. The circle had stood on the southern slopes of Eitshal, the largest of the peat-covered hills in the area, now surmounted by the island's TV mast. Locating the various positions of the buried fallen stones, Margaret realised that this had once been a very large circle. But most exciting was the view down towards Sleeping Beauty. For just as that landscape phenomenon was only visible in the Callanish area, here at Achmor stone circle, Margaret discovered that the realignment of the distant hills had conspired to make Sleeping Beauty appear pregnant!

With the discovery of the Achmor stone circle, Margaret's hunch that all the megaliths were orientated on the distant hill-figure now became a sustainable and tenable proposition. And it was slowly becoming clear to her that the stone circles were all cunningly placed lunar temples from which worshippers could have watched the moon rise out of the distant eastern horizon and then appear to move across the sky, dipping in and out of valleys, climbing ridges and dancing down distant gulleys. And, at all times, the great silent Mother called Cailleach na Mointeach would have lain upon the horizon at the anchor of the sky – a mute but compliant witness to the great cosmic displays of love and thanksgiving going on around her.

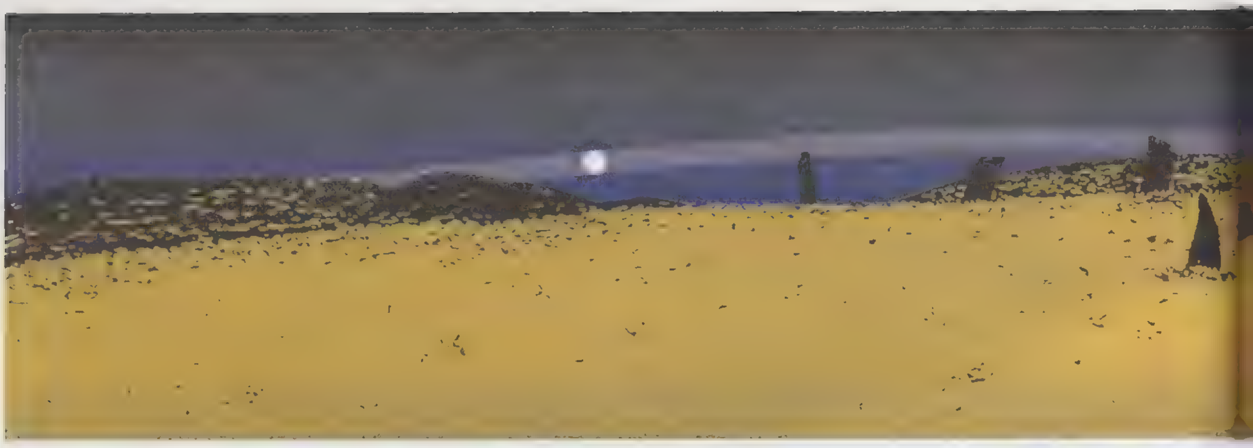
Up here in the Outer Hebrides, the latitude of 58° ensures that the moon only skims the surface of the horizon on its nightly travels across the sky. If we were to journey much further north of Callanish we would miss the transits of the moon altogether, for, at too high a latitude, she would not even make it over the horizon. This is quite hard for people to comprehend if they live in the south of England because there the moon rises so high in the vastness of the sky that its movements appear crazy and random. Only when we travel north can we get the moon to appear closer to the horizon. And when we move further south to the Mediterranean where the moon appears so high as to be above our heads, we may begin to understand why the Classical writers considered the

BELOW: The low stones of Airidh nam Bideram, on the hillside south of Ceann Hulavig, align on the horizon of Sleeping Beauty (inset).





OVAL INSET: Margaret Curtis at Achmor.
BELOW: At Achmor stone circle the belly of Sleeping Beauty becomes 'pregnant'.
ABOVE: The silhouette of Camster long cairn also mirrors the recumbent Goddess.



THE TRANSITS OF THE MOON FROM SLEEPING BEAUTY TO CLISHAM AS

northern parts of Britain to be the ideal place for moon-watching.

After years of calculation, Margaret realised that the perfect moon observation would take place from the main Callanish avenue when the moon was at its most southerly extreme. And this took place on a clear night in June 1987 CE. Even ten years later, Margaret plays *Also Sprach Zarathustra* when she talks of that mind-opening three-hour event. The moon rose out of the chest of Sleeping Beauty, slowly passed west across the short eastern avenue of stones, dipped into the great rocky outcrop of Cnoc an Tursa and disappeared for a few minutes before bursting into light once more in the centre of the Callanish circle at the foot of the fabulous central stone. Margaret later wrote:

> *'The most awe-inspiring moment of all was when the moon reappeared inside the circle. For three minutes, never revealing more than half of its orb in the narrow gap, the moon was captured in the artificial frame of megaliths and the cold grey pillars of stone were bathed in a golden glow. Like a lighthouse beam the moonlight stretched along the avenue towards us and caught us in its light.'*

Decoding astronomical Callanish 2

But how did the Ancients learn the movements of so capricious a heavenly body as the moon, and why? For when Shakespeare wrote of 'the inconstant Moon', he was really not kidding – the moon only retraces its steps every 18.61 years.

The answer really lies in our own linear post-Christian perception of time, for in the great scheme of the Mother Goddess religions, eighteen-and-a-half years was less than the blink of an eye. Indeed, understanding the transits of the moon would have been crucial to the smooth-running of the agricultural economy on which the Neolithic peoples relied and of which they were righteously proud. The terror induced in modern primitive tribes by a lunar eclipse of the sun illustrates the power and trust which the agriculturists of Callanish could have wielded once they had learned to control their lunar calendar.

It is known that, before the builders finally agreed to 'cast' their monuments in stone, the Callanish circles existed for many years as often-changing wooden post-structures, and we earlier learned that the 5,500-year-old Mother mound called Knowth, north of Dublin, spent its first 500 years in a similar wooden state. Even if we halve this time to 250 years at Callanish, that would still have given eight generations of observers thirteen separate opportunities to make their calculations. When we consider that these megalithic temples were likely to have been in use for as long as 1,500 years, the Ancients' understanding of the transits of the moon then becomes a little easier to accept. And there is certainly clear enough evidence for us to talk about Callanish in these vast time scales.

SEEN FROM THE CALLANISH AVENUE - DISCOVERED BY MARGARET CURTIS

At the main site, the north–south orientation of the long stone avenues had been achieved by the erection of an enormous metre-thick wooden trunk at the Cnoc an Tursa, the rocky outcrop just south of the main site. Using this hugely tall pole as a 'fore-sight', the builders of Callanish had been able to walk over a mile north of the intended monument to make its orientation ultra-precise. Margaret had long suggested this possibility after her discovery of a still-standing 'back-site' stone north of the village to the east of the cemetery, but it was not until the excavation of the Cnoc an Tursa by Edinburgh University students that she had been proved correct. Using these 'temporary' wooden structures, it appeared that the builders of Callanish had slowly corralled the Wheel of the Year, marking and remarking the ground with first wooden rods, then poles, for long decades of observation, until they understood their night sky completely. And there were even clever megalithic devices which had allowed the Ancients to predict equinoctial and solsticial sunrises. For example, Margaret discovered that two of the tall standing stones within the main Callanish circle had been erected in such a way that a 'window' was created directing the viewer's eyes to the exact position of the midwinter sunrise. Clearly, this phenomenon had been designed into the temporary wooden structure, the builders then spending their time finding accurate stone replacements with which they made their permanent 'cast'.

And in the same way that temples of Ver may have also been partly dedicated to Bridgit, so it was that lunar Callanish also had a smaller solar role. But a late Iron Age memory of the former pre-eminence of Callanish as a temple of the moon seems to have been echoed in the words of the pre-Christian Roman scholar Diodorus Siculus, who, in 21 BCE, wrote:

'...beyond the land of the Celts there lies in the ocean an island ... situated in the north ... inhabited by the Hyperboreans ... and there is ... both a magnificent sacred precinct ... and a notable temple ... spherical in shape... The moon as viewed from this island appears to be but a little distance from the earth ... and the god visits the island every nineteen years and ... dances continuously through the night until the rising of the Pleiades.'[7]

Still digging

But Margaret Curtis' cosmic mind was not just confined to the higher elements of prehistoric discovery. In the mid-'70s, Margaret had been walking in the main stone avenue one late spring afternoon when she had noticed the broken top of the large 'Druid' stone at the very north end. Bemoaning the fact that such a splendid stone should be so close to complete,

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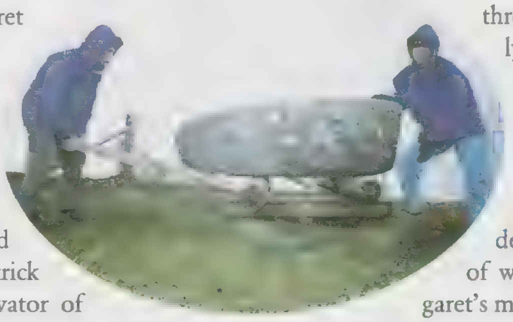
7 Diodorus Siculus, *Histories*, translated by Sir Thomas Kendrick

Margaret gazed directly ahead at the drystone field wall and spotted one particular stone from some yards away. She walked over to the stone and pulled it out of the wall. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this were the tip of that broken stone? thought Margaret. Hmmm... More than remarkably, she was right. The top of the stone was officially replaced in September 1978 by Neil McPhee of the Ancient Monuments Commission and Margaret turned her attentions elsewhere.



Few fallen stones are likely to remain underground at Callanish, for, as we have seen, the monument's millennia in peat have left it in a surprisingly complete state. Yet in 1977 Margaret divined the presence of a buried stone at the end of the short eastern avenue. After prodding the ground with a metal rod for days, Margaret and Gerald found the buried stone and petitioned Patrick Ashmore,[8] supposed excavator of Callanish, to dig it up and re-erect it. This Ashmore eventually did – in 1982! – and very good it looked on 'his' report. But Margaret had petitioned the authorities for five long years before this action was taken, and she found the whole exercise debilitating and extremely annoying. That the unbridled movements of a Blakean visionary such as she could be controlled by some anonymous Cyclopean pen-pusher in Edinburgh illustrated the low aims and achievements required of prehistoric orthodoxy. It is a fact of life that amateur prehistorians are treated with cavalier disregard by most archaeologists. Often, this is because the archaeologist is aiming to make a career out of his work and avoids speculation for fear of looking foolish in front of his colleagues. He has trodden the narrow path of higher education, playing the game by the rules at every point along his route, and has no wish to see some perceived 'underling' turning his victory into defeat. Also, as a specialist looking at one tiny brush stroke, he has no interest in the entire painting. The relationships of sites hundreds of miles apart are plainly not his concern. But he is the expert because he has the papers. And it was for this reason that the archaeologist Stuart Piggott made his famously daft retort on TV in 1971: 'Only professional archaeologists have the *right* [my italics] to put forward new ideas in archaeology.' To which the credential-ridden and none-more-experienced archaeologist T. C. Lethbridge would have been driven to reply: 'Archaeologists are mostly like sheep. If one digs the entrance to a camp, all must do so.'[9]

It was not until I got to know Margaret and saw what she went through to get her own, clearly visionary, ideas taken seriously by the Establishment that I understood how science and its obsession with compartmentalising everything had destroyed the natural flow of wisdom in the West. Margaret's main 'problem' seemed to be that her work reconciled all the monuments to their environment, implying that prehistoric Humanity had moved around its sacred home exerting a greater control than most scientists were prepared to believe.

And it was not until I had visited huge amounts of Neolithic Britain, with the obsession of one who knows that he will reap important spiritual dividends in later life, that I began to notice a glaring gap in the way in which megalithic Humanity was being studied. I saw that archaeologists were not even conferring between the various Ages (Neolithic, Bronze, Iron, Roman, and so forth) and understood that, as a traveller by profession, I was ideally suited to perform this task of pilgrimage and sacred reconnaissance. On such a Gnostic odyssey, merely being at each site would allow a huge overview of the Neolithic period, which is, all too often, mixed up with everything else before the Roman times and reduced to a generic 'prehistory' tag.

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[8] Patrick Ashmore: Dug 1982, report unpublished

[9] T. C. Lethbridge, *Witches*

The Hapgoodian principle

Throughout our time at Callanish, I had been reading Charles Hapgood's 1966 *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, a work of extraordinary vision from a most reluctant scholar. But in spite of the wondrous nature of the text, I was more intrigued by Hapgood's thunderous looseness in his method. A major league cartographer and geologist, Charles Hapgood happily delegated his research to all his students at Keane State College at the University of New Hampshire, whom he trusted without reservation. 'Every scientist is an amateur to start with,' said Hapgood. It was the most refreshing attitude of any scholar I had encountered and I devoured the main text and all the appendices.

Hapgood spanned a mythical age. He constantly quoted his favourite college tutor, James H. Campbell, who had been a young assistant of Thomas Edison. Hapgood's attitude had obviously originated in Edison, for he quoted Campbell as saying: '...when a difficult problem was being discussed, Edison said it was too difficult for any specialist. It would be necessary, he said, for some amateur to solve it.' But Thomas Edison himself burned with the light of the true amateur, for it was he who once said: 'I have not failed 10,000 times, I have successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.'

From my own obsessions, I understood that Margaret Curtis lived by an enormously clear vision but that this was fuelled by a deep commitment to the realisation of that vision; in other words, the wonder of the stones needed to get out to people. She had arrived in Callanish and, for over twenty years, applied her incredible genius to the mysteries of the stones – and with considerable results. But I worried about her unhealthy regard for the orthodox scientific community. How could one such as Margaret hope to reconcile the Great Light of her discoveries with the dim beams of the Establishment? Surely her work was so obvious that a Big Book of Callanish was all that was required – in published form the sheer volume of her work would crush the doubters beneath its wisdom.

I went to bed that night with Charles Hapgood's book and read:

'...the specialist who starts out by learning what everybody else has done before him is not likely to initiate anything very new. An expert is a man who knows everything, or nearly everything, and usually thinks he knows everything important in his field. If he doesn't think he knows everything, at least he knows that other people know less, and thinks that amateurs know nothing. And so he has an unwise contempt for amateurs, despite the fact that it is to amateurs that innumerable important discoveries in all fields of science have been due.'[10]

Passing the baton – the shapes of Margaret to come

I have been to Callanish for five of the last seven years and the Margaret & Ron axis has continued unabated. One day in 1992 CE, Margaret discovered Druim Dubh stone circle from the top deck of a Stornaway bus. Within the year, G. Ron Curtis had got the council to move the electricity pylon off the site. In 1993 CE, I opined to Margaret that there could be symbolically placed stone circles at the foot of each of the sacred mountains which constituted Sleeping Beauty, as I had experienced this in Cornwall and Cumbria whilst applying Margaret's landscape perception wherever I went. Within the year, she had discovered Fangs stone circle, beautifully placed at the 'feet' of Sleeping Beauty, ultra-still at the head of a loch.

Margaret Curtis has still not finished her Big Book of Callanish because she has spent the last year excavating a huge flat cairn which is on the alignment of the long avenues at the main site. Not only does this extend the Callanish north–south line by almost an extra mile, but the cairn just happens to be 100 yards from Margaret and Ron's house.

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[10] *Charles H. Hapgood, Serendipity Notes of 18th March 1997 CE:* Out of the blue a signed copy of Graham Hancock's *Fingerprints of the Gods* arrived today, with a big banner proclaiming 'The No. 1 Bestseller'. I picked it up and the opening chapter is dedicated to Charles Hapgood! Thirty-one years after being published, Hapgood's time has truly come.

Serendipity? Why ask?

But the Nature spirit which holds Margaret Curtis in its thrall is a vital force to know about, and the thoughts that I wrote down at the unearthly Dalbeg Beach, early on the morning of 12th August 1993 CE, still convey for me the essence of Margaret's magic:

'Margaret has moved hundreds of tons of stone for Ron's garage, sea-canoes around the island and is involved in sub-aqua classes. This is as clearly a living legend as anyone I ever knew of … every moment we spend with her on site fills me with a real sense of awe. She has a mono-maniacal dedication to Callanish and goes into a daydream whenever we talk of other sites. It is this which turns her into Ms Callanish, a real psychic queen and high-priestess of No-badge-at-all. Yesterday, I truly understood that magical people must be accepted, helped and not made to feel guilty for their unworldliness. Margaret Curtis is a huge heroine.'

Fangs stone circle at the feet of Sleeping Beauty. Margaret & Mr Mitchell stand in the place of circle stones lost to the encroaching settlement.

Archaeologists uncover Margaret Curtis' lost eastern avenue stone. © Margaret R Curtis.
TOP LEFT: Margaret's northern avenue stone with the tip replaced.

CHAPTER
SEVEN

Silbury & the Sacred Hills, Recumbent Mother Figures & Some Analogous Hill Altars

'…it seems likely that in a number of cases circles are positioned in relation to "sacred hills".'

JOHN BARNETT, *PREHISTORIC CORNWALL*

'Where are the pre-Silbury Silburys?'

MICHAEL DAMES, *THE SILBURY TREASURE*

Recumbent landscape figures

As we raced down the map of Britain after our first meeting with Margaret Curtis, I was seeing the world in an entirely different light. This feeling burned so ferociously that I was thirsty for the landscape, which opened out before me like a giantess's counterpane. I visualised all the Neolithic sites which we had already visited and trawled my mind as we travelled in case I may have forgotten any potentially sacred hills. Was every prominent hill sacred to the Ancients? Had they all previously had stone circles built at their feet? If the Neolithic people of Callanish had done so, was it not likely that all their contemporaries had felt the same way?

In North America, the Navajo tribe had always referred to the earth as Naetstan, or 'the reclining woman', whilst in Connecticut on the eastern seaboard there was a huge recumbent mountain figure known as the Sleeping Giant. The figure had even been named as such to the new white incomers by the local tribes. Nowadays, the Sleeping Giant is a national monument rising out of a still-wooded urban area, but the head, the body, the very 'being' of the giant's form, still retain their original representative shape. Similar, too, was Bennarty in the dramatic Lowlands north of Edinburgh. Bennarty, or 'the Hill of Arthur', is a long low massive torso of land with a separate 'head' at its north. And even in this heavily farmed and increasingly urbanised area, the standing stones of Orwell[1] still skulk in the lea of this great recumbent figure. I remembered, too, the enormous black massif called Tap O'Noth in Aberdeenshire, which we had visited prior to our meeting with Margaret. This was as stylised a recumbent figure as any hill formation could be

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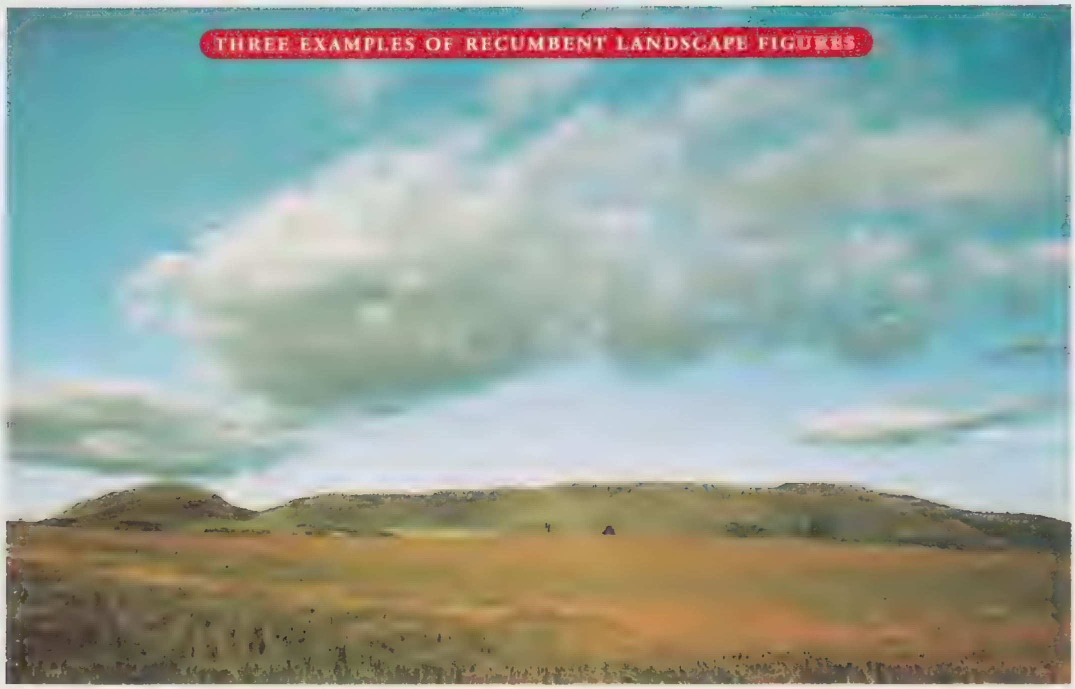
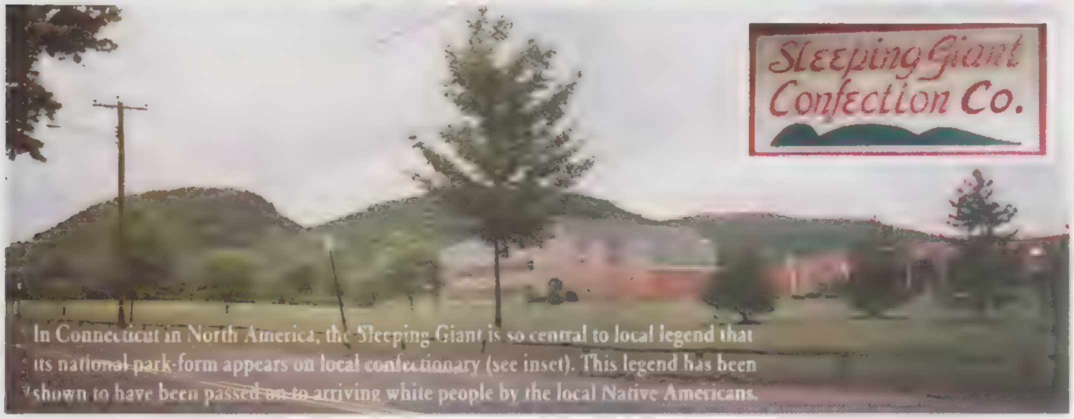
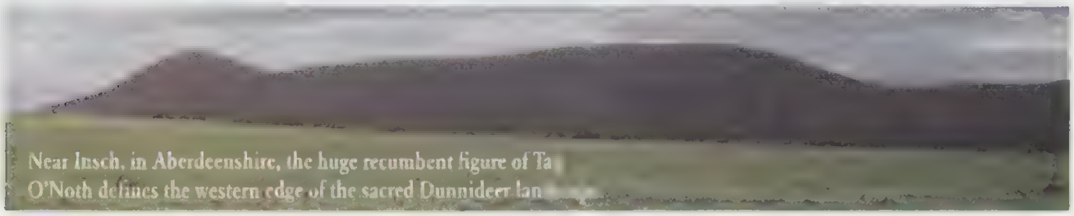
1 Bennarty (which can be found in most road atlases) and the Orwell stones are close to Ballingry, Lowland Scotland

THREE EXAMPLES OF RECUMBENT LANDSCAPE FIGURES





In Connecticut in North America, the Sleeping Giant is so central to local legend that its national park-form appears on local confectionary (see inset). This legend has been shown to have been passed on to arriving white people by the local Native Americans.



Near Insch, in Aberdeenshire, the huge recumbent figure of Ta
O'Noth defines the western edge of the sacred Dunnideer lan

TOP PHOTO: The two Orwell stones look tiny in their field, standing before Bennarty's majestic form. But, close up, they are both tall pillars, angular, rounded and mighty, when not surrounded by a crop of wheat. The smaller of the stones fell in the 1970s, at which time opportunity was taken to excavate. The hollow in which the stone had sat for millennia was set within a cremation deposit of bone. At the base of the other stone were two burials, separated by a megalithic slab, as though an attempt had been made to construct a rudimentary kist, or stone chest.

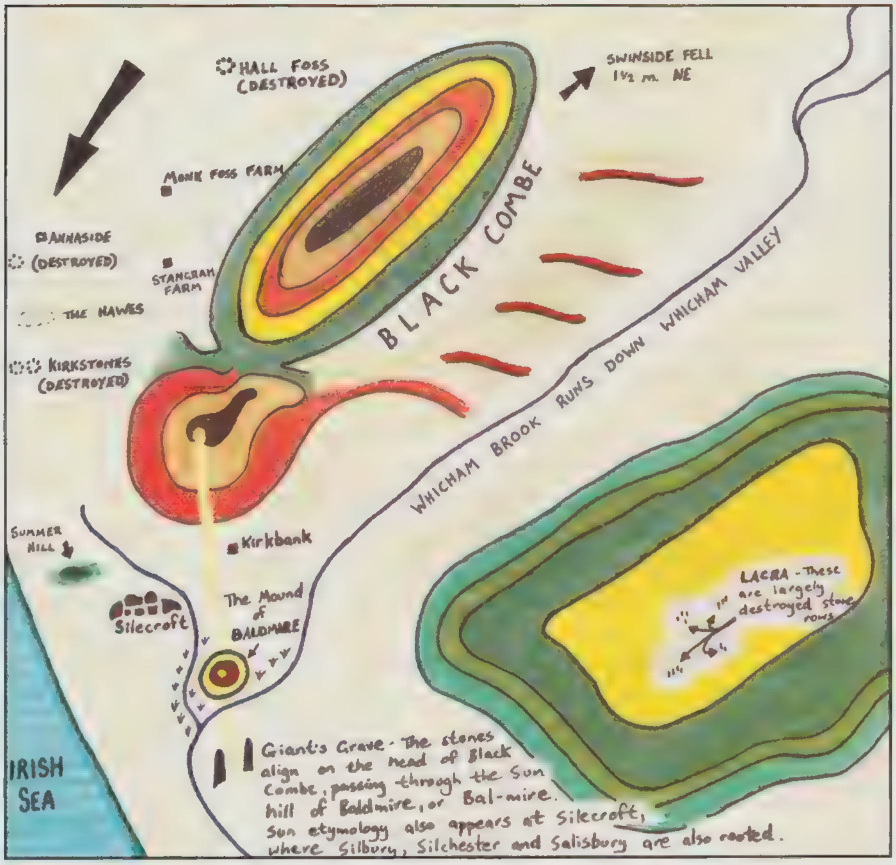
and I determined to examine all the land around Tap O'Noth the following summer.

But now it was the end of March 1993 CE and we travelled to Cumbria armed with vast numbers of maps and books, hoping to gain an overview of this strange prehistoric territory. The trip had a disastrous car-trouble beginning but then continued smoothly, and by the end of our time there, I was excited to discover some more obscure places. Dredging the appendices of a local book about stone circles, I suddenly read a quite dismissive description of two tall standing stones called the Giant's Grave^G on the far south Cumbrian coast. These stones sounded fabulous and we quickly set out to visit them.

A description of Black Combe

It was All Fools' Day 1993 CE when we all-foolishly took the west coast road to the Giant's Grave, and I was constantly affronted by that horrendous horizon violation called Sellafield. I could not help looking back and torturing myself with it – so much so, in fact, that we had arrived at our destination, parked the car and walked 200 yards into the green field before I let out a sudden gasp of realisation. For there in front of me were two extraordinary sabre-bladed stones … and beyond, rising out of the flat fertile coastal plain, glowed a wonderful Mother mountain, entirely different from Sleeping Beauty, Tap O'Noth or the Sleeping Giant, but clearly a recumbent figure. I pulled out my map and looked at the contoured outline rising in metaphor on the paper – her name was Black Combe.

AT ANNASIDE STONE CIRCLE, BLACK COMBE APPEARED AS BLACK ANNIS


HALL FOSS (DESTROYED)
SWINSIDE FELL 1½ m. NE
MONK FOSS FARM
ANNASIDE (DESTROYED)
STANGRAM FARM
THE HAWES
KIRKSTONES (DESTROYED)
BLACK COMBE
WHICHAM BROOK RUNS DOWN WHICHAM VALLEY
SUMMER HILL
Kirkbank
Silecroft
The Mound of BALDMIRE
LACRA - These are largely destroyed stone rows
IRISH SEA

Giant's Grave - The stones
align on the head of Black
Combe, passing through the Sun
hill of Baldmire, or Bal-mire.
Sun etymology also appears at Silecroft,
where Silbury, Silchester and Salisbury are also rooted.

This Black Combe, on the Duddon Sands, was a natural massif of mountain-size, looking for all the world like a pregnant Mother on her back. She had a face, arms at her side and a huge belly, round and full. To her south on a north–south alignment was the natural hill called Baldmire, a smaller child-of-a-hill standing at the centre of boggy ground. And 600 yards further south stood the tall magnificent standing stones called the Giant's Grave. Both stones were lethal knifeblade sculptures tearing out of the ground, their blade edges both skewed over to frame Baldmire trapezoidally whilst simultaneously aligning with the head of Black Combe. And both stones were carved with large deep cup-marks, one on the westernmost stone and a downward-pointing triangle of three on the easternmost stone, probably signifying the pubis of the Goddess.

As a megalithic observatory, the Giant's Grave should probably be excavated for evidence of a platform or paving stones. The ground around the stones appears to be extremely compacted, perhaps from centuries of dancing feet. Checking out local records, I soon discovered that several stone circles had once ringed the low foothills of Black Combe during the Neolithic, but tragically all were now destroyed. Nevertheless, the former glory of this sacred centre had been retained in various local references, particularly in the name of Kirkbank farm, situated in the southern lea of the head of Black Combe. 'Kirk' means 'church', which often equally well applies to a megalithic monument, such as the Sunkenkirk,[G] just one-and-a-half miles to the north-east.

Formerly, at the northern head of Black Combe stood the Kirkstones, a huge double-circle which had survived until the end of the 19th century, described as late as 1874 thus: 'On the Green Moor Farm are 30 stones called Kirkstones, forming part of 2 circles, similar in position to those of Stonehenge.'[2] South of Kirkstones stood a now-removed cairn with a twenty-five yard diameter, whilst just to the north was Annaside stone circle, now wholly obliterated save one huge boulder of coarsely crystalline granite. At Annaside, the figure of Black Combe would have appeared as the Goddess Black Annis, whose reputation as 'the destroyer' somewhat explains Black Combe's similar dark reputation. The archaeologist John Waterhouse suggests that there was another circle east of Annaside and supports his theory with the farm's name, Stangrah.[3] North of this farm at Hall Foss stood 'standing stones consisting of 8 massive rude columns, disposed in a circle 25 yards in diameter'.[4] They were destroyed at the end of the 19th century, but, like their other conscientiously murdered contemporaries, our knowledge of their former glory presents us with a very special Mother mountain in the dramatic outlines of Black Combe. The Lacra stone circles and avenues, which stand on the hill south of Black Combe, overlook the aptly titled Whicham Valley. Whicham Brook flows north past Kirksanton and the Giant's Grave, then bears left and passes close enough to Baldmire to render it a 'mire' worthy of its name, the brook then progressing north-east up the valley towards Swinside. Such a Pagan centre was this whole area that the coming of Christianity discouraged people even from visiting anymore. Even now, there's a local memory of the time when 'God-fearing' people were warned to stay away from the Old Religion, in the phrase: 'Nowt good comes round Black Combe.'[5]

Tortolocate

The discovery of the Black Combe complex on April Fools' Day was extremely elating. Our day had begun in disillusion at Greycroft stone circle[G] in the lea of that Sellafield horror, when Dorian had discovered that the circle's outlying stone had been dumped casually within the precincts of the circle itself. But the action stations at the Giant's Grave had sent us to the moon and, in the low sun of the late afternoon, we drove back to our holiday home in Keswick with broad grins on our faces.

Suggesting that we detour back past Blakeley

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[2] J. Ecclestone, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 1874, Vol.I

[3] John Waterhouse, *The Stone Circles of Cumbria*

[4] W. Hutchinson, *The History of the County of Cumberland*, Carlisle, 1794

[5] J. Hogg, 1972

Raise stone circle,[G] Dorian suddenly yelled, 'What are those crop marks?' Over to our left was a series of coffee-mug-type stains upon the green baize field system. They were the marks of some ancient settlement, complete with holes where posts had stood millennia before. I searched on the map and, at the spot where Dorian had discovered them, was a place called Tortolocate.[6] Phonetically, it read 'Taught to Locate'. Our journey home was downhill all the way.

Mother hills & hill altars

The following months were full of massive revelations in this Gnostic odyssey, for the sacred hills of Britain inevitably began to show themselves in the landscape. I remembered having first seen the sculptured carved rings all around the summit of Cley Hill near Longleat in Wiltshire and having ignorantly dismissed them as mere Iron Age defence. But now I returned to Cley Hill and saw that, even without the carvings, here was a magnificent sacred hill loudly declaring itself to one and all. The pressurised Iron Age tribes had chosen to take refuge upon this hill, which had previously been considered too sacred for their forebears to settle upon. As the coming Bronze/Iron Age civilisations had drastically reduced the remaining cultivable land, spirituality would have become very secondary to the rush for self-preservation.

I determined to research as many hillforts as I could find which may have been superimposed on original Mother hills. Many of the hillforts, such as Maiden Castle in Dorset,[G] and Midsummer Hill[7] in Herefordshire, had Neolithic longbarrows, or even bank barrows, within their defences. Other hillforts had originated by re-sculpting the Neolithic ditches into deeply defined chasms, using the spoil from the ditches to further embank the more easily defendable central area. Here was clearly a correlation between Bronze/Iron Age hillforts and the causewayed enclosures of the Neolithic, or, as Aubrey Burl writes, in *The Stone Circles of the British Isles,* 'The construction of forts ... on the sites of causewayed enclosures might have arisen from the wish to perpetuate the traditional meeting-places of natives.'

Then I remembered Dunnideer,[8] a conical hill close to Tap O'Noth, near Insch in Aberdeenshire, surmounted by a destroyed 12th-century chapel, creating a Scottish Glastonbury Tor. But even better, two lesser sacred hills, the Hill of Flinders and the Hill O'Christ's Kirk, accompanied Dunnideer in the landscape, creating an outrageous Triple Goddess. The landscape around Dunnideer was still littered with the remains of stone circles,[9] so perhaps Glastonbury had once been the same. Glastonbury legend had always referred to the throwing down of great stones in early Christian times, but the Neolithics had never built stone circles on the summits of their sacred hills, preferring to leave them 'bald' or occasionally topped with a great cairn of stones.[10] It was only later, with the coming of the Bronze Age and its introduction of much smaller family-size monuments, such as those on Dartmoor[11] and the tiny later Cumbrian rings,[12] that any kind of stones were erected on hilltops. If no great standing stones had been erected on the actual summits of sacred hills, perhaps the presence of the St. Michael Tower upon the Glastonbury Tor had acted as a smokescreen – for if people believed that the tower had replaced a stone circle, then they were unlikely to look elsewhere in the area for megalithic significance. And stones on a windswept hill is an antiquarian cliché of the past centuries, however far from reality it is. The presence of Dunnideer showed that Glastonbury Tor could no longer be regarded as a lone spiritual omphalos, but only as the-most-famous-example of what could be umpteen undiscovered Mother hills in Britain. And on our next trip to

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[6] Tortolocate is at O.S. 89.043097

[7] Geoffrey Williams, *The Iron Age Hillforts of England*

[8] Dunnideer is discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

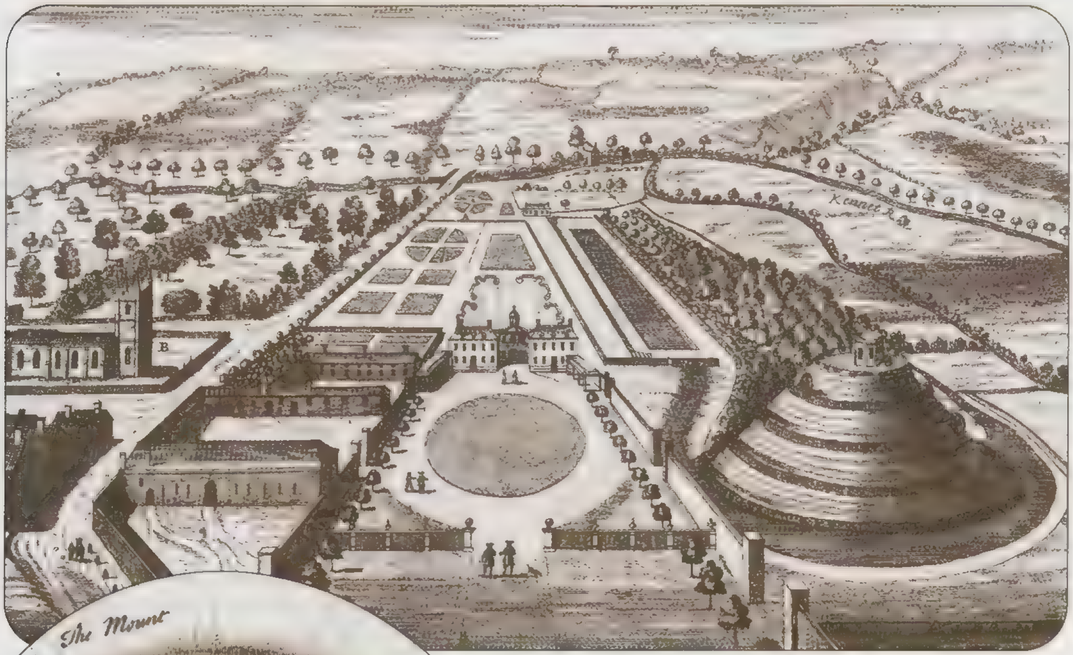
[9] Stone circles around Dunnideer remain at Stonehead,[G] Wantonwells, Inschfield and, in the lea of Dunnideer itself, the cantankerously spelled Dunnydeer stone circle.[G]

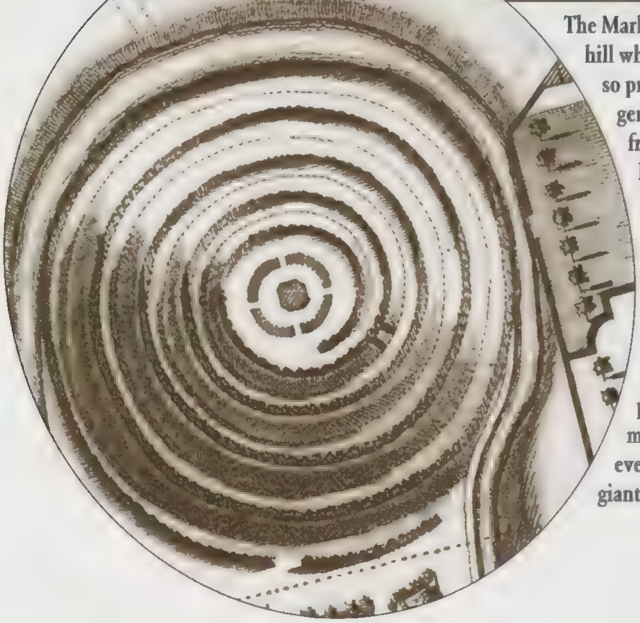
[10] Two mighty Aberdeenshire stone circles, Wantonwells and Hawkhill, were actually erected on the summit of their hills. The lesser stone circle at Candle Hill was also erected upon the summit but this circle, like Wantonwells, still achieved all of its focus from the nearby Dunnideer.

[11] The best Dartmoor examples are at 1. c) 2 at the tiny Ringmoor circle and rows, and at 1. c) 9 at the hilltop rows of Shovel Down.

[12] Examples of these Cumbrian stone circles are Castlehowe Scar at O.S. 91.587155 and White Hag at O.S. 91.607115

With its later Iron Age earthworks, the sacred Cley Hill, near Longleat in Wiltshire, is visible for miles around.





The Marlborough Mount is a miniature Silbury, a Neolithic Mother hill which has lain neglected for millennia. Marlborough town is so proud of its early 13th-century charter that it remains generally unaware that the very name Marlborough comes from this mysterious 'marl bury' or 'chalk-mound'. Thomas Hardy referred to the town as Marlbury in his *Wessex Tales*, and the roots of 'marl' are also seen in the white of 'marble'. These two illustrations taken from William Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* of 1723 show the Mount here prissily presented with a summer house atop a spiral path. It is unknown whether the spiral pathway was a brand-new construction, or merely the recutting of a previously overgrown pathway of significantly earlier provenance. The Mount was dismissed as a likely Norman motte for many years and, even now, no excavations have ever been attempted. Unfortunately, today sees this elusive giant hidden behind trees and surmounted by a large water tower.

Scotland, the following summer, weeks would be devoted to discovering the relationships of the hundreds of Grampian megaliths to their respective sacred hills.

In *The Silbury Treasure*, Michael Dames had proposed that Silbury was a giant representative of the pregnant belly of the Great Mother and the American archaeologist Marija Gimbutas had said much the same thing in her definitive pictorial epic *The Language of the Goddess*. As we have already seen from Newgrange's Bridgit connection with the Keltic ***bru*** as 'womb'/'big belly' and ***brugh*** as 'a tumulus',[13] there was already an earlier prehistoric precedent for Gimbutas' and Dames' analogy. And Margaret Curtis' discovery of the pregnant Sleeping Beauty at Achmor confirmed that the great belly of the Mother was a powerful and resonant Neolithic landscape image.

Silbury became the inspiration for a Neolithic cult of huge constructed hill altars. Six miles south of the Kennet Valley, within the precincts of the great Marden henge, the mighty Hatfield Barrow had stood to a height of twenty-two feet until its wanton 'excavation' by Richard Colt-Hoare and William Cunnington in 1809. Unfortunately, its sandy soil was no match for such barbarism and, by 1818, even Colt-Hoare had to admit that, concerning the Hatfield Barrow, 'no signs remained of its previous existence'.[14] Six miles to Silbury's east stood the magnificent Marlborough Mount, like Silbury a construction of such durability that it even survived Lord Hartford's 17th-century sculpting of a spiral path and the building of a giant water tank on its summit. Today the Mount stands tree-lined and forgotten in the grounds of Marlborough Boys' College, the townsfolk unaware that Marlborough's original name, 'Marl-burh', literally means 'chalk mound'.

In the Peak District at Arbor Low,[G] the completion of a smaller analogous Avebury henge was followed by a small similarly-orientated Silbury analogue called Gib Hill which, though it stood only eighteen feet high, was visible right across the landscape. High up on the gentle downland of the Yorkshire Wolds, Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill, two huge Neolithic mounds, stood half a mile apart on the banks of the magical Gypsey Race.[G] Though scandalously vandalised and greatly reduced in height, both hills still sit splendidly in their low open countryside. Aubrey Burl has suggested that both of these mounds had an influence on the building of Silbury.[15] Certainly, there are tremendous similarities between the two landscapes. Just as the Marlborough Downs rise dramatically from the surrounding lowlands, so do the Yorkshire Wolds from the low-lying Carrs at the north. The Kennet and the Gypsey Race are siblings – occasional rivers with mythical risings. And everywhere is the profusion of flint, the ultimate symbol of Neolithic success.

No burials have been discovered in any of these Mother mounds. Indeed, the Hatfield Barrow most likely fell because one of its excavators, William Cunnington, was utterly convinced that he would find a stone kist at the mound's centre. Unlike the enormous Carnac Grand Tumuli, with their unreachable chambers full of spectacular grave goods, excavations of these hill altars have discovered only deposits of clay, flint, bone, potshard and even broken deer antler. This may have been the Ancients' way of symbolising that these mounds were specifically dedicated to the Mother Earth, containing all that Humanity took from the earth, reshaped and returned to the earth. For though the mounds represented the Mother Earth's pregnant belly, they also represented the Great Mother in several other aspects. It is always important to remember that the Neolithics still lived in a forested world where great tracts of impenetrable undergrowth filled with wild animals often barred their way. High ground would have come to represent safety and a grander

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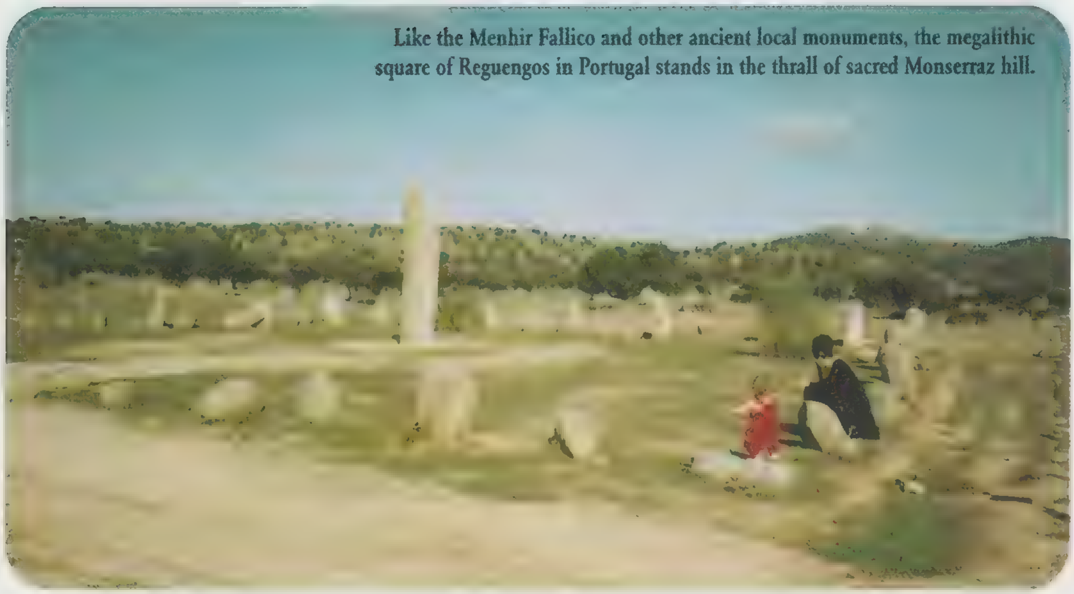
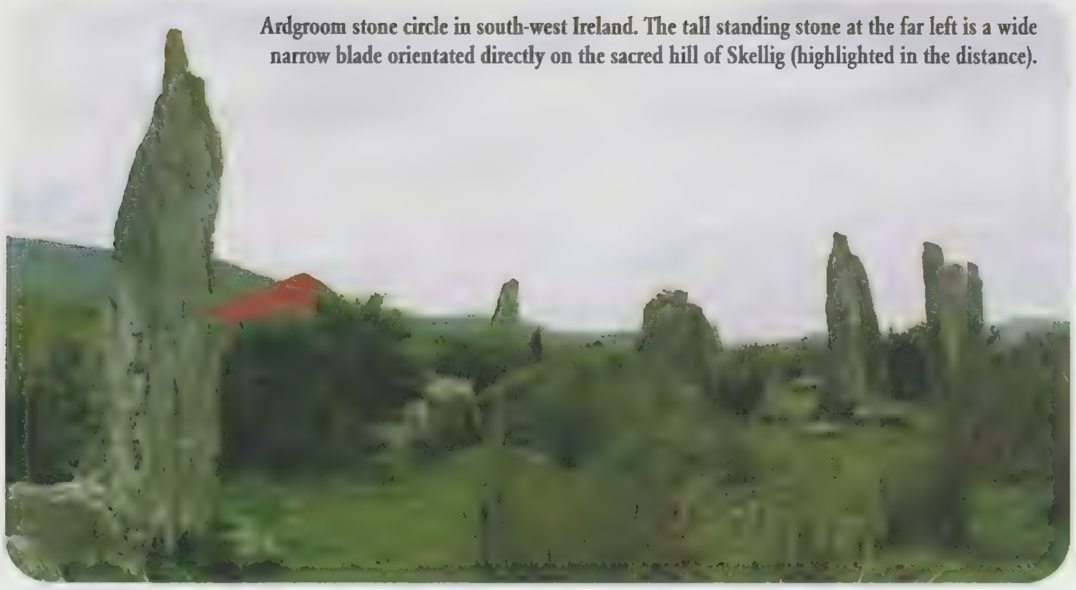
[13] Malcolm Maclennan, *Gaelic Dictionary*

[14] In his huge two-volume *Ancient Wiltshire*, Sir Richard Colt-Hoare's description of the excavation of the Hatfield barrow is a revelation in itself. Halfway through the digging of this enormous mound, a thunderstorm caused such waterlogging of the sand that the unshored sides collapsed, almost killing Colt-Hoare's workmen. Yet Colt-Hoare writes his account in a way that is clearly meant to make us feel sorry for him rather than the workmen: '...alas! notwithstanding all our energy and exertions, we were doomed to remain in ignorance respecting the original destination of this gigantic barrow; and fortunately had not (added to our disappointment) to regret the loss of several labourers, who most providentially escaped an untimely end by having been called off from their work by Mr. Cunnington, at a time when the soil of the barrow appeared sound, but proved otherwise, by falling in very shortly after the men had quitted their labours.'

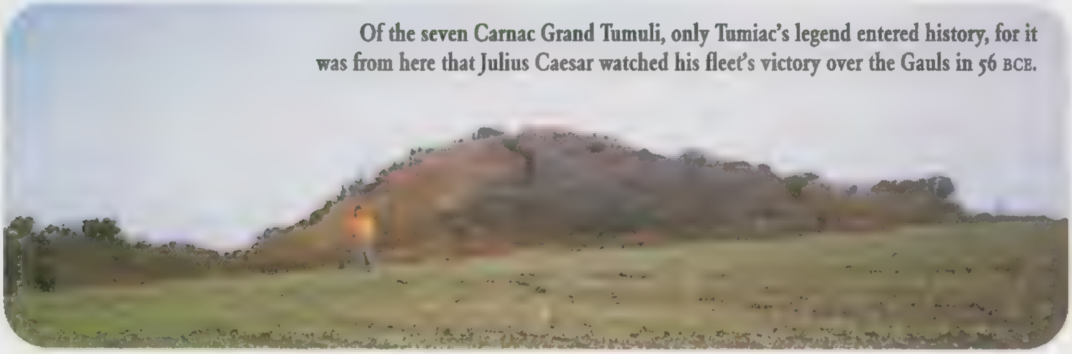
[15] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*



Like the Menhir Fallico and other ancient local monuments, the megalithic square of Reguengos in Portugal stands in the thrall of sacred Monserraz hill.



Ardgroom stone circle in south-west Ireland. The tall standing stone at the far left is a wide narrow blade orientated directly on the sacred hill of Skellig (highlighted in the distance).



Of the seven Carnac Grand Tumuli, only Tumiac's legend entered history, for it was from here that Julius Caesar watched his fleet's victory over the Gauls in 56 BCE.

overview of their immediate world. So, symbolically, these hill altars also represented their will and technical ability to create safety and spiritual contemplation in a still dangerous world.

The proto-Silbury landscape

'Where are the pre-Silbury Silburys?' asked Michael Dames in the banner quote from *The Silbury Treasure* at the beginning of this chapter. And it is certainly an essential question to ask. Silbury may first have been built as a replica hill altar in an area which was lacking one. But if Aubrey Burl is correct, and Ba'l Hill and Willy Howe on the Yorkshire Wolds really were the proto-Silburys, then what directly influenced the building of those two hills?

The huge open Cumbrian stone circle known as Gamelands stands in a wide valley at the foot of Knott (or Cnut) Hill, a cairn-topped and magical eminence, but still part of a general mountain range. Perhaps a better example of a Cumbrian sacred hill would be Swinside, the conical mountain which rises above the great Sunkenkirk stone circle to the south-west. But though correct in shape, Swinside is again still part of a great hill range. And, like Knockeans Hill, which rises above the Glenquickan circle,^{G} there is no perceived separation from the landscape. Surely any true reference point for the builders of Silbury would have to have been a hill in relatively flat land, standing proud of its scenery. For example, the great megalithic square enclosure at Reguengos in southern Portugal stands in very flat featureless land, whilst the hill of Monserraz rises dramatically in the background. And at the Ardgroom stone circle, on the Beara Peninsula in Southern Ireland, where a perfect sacred landscape unfolds on the level plateau between the Kenmare river and the massif known as Toureenamna, there is a beautiful conical sacred hill known as Skellig, rising at the edge of Glenbeg Lough. A nine-foot-tall outlying stone stands just to the east of the circle, its flat sabre-bladed sides orientated directly on Skellig itself, in exactly the same way that the stones of the Giant's Grave are orientated onto the head of Black Combe.

In Lowland Scotland, the three outrageous stones of Lundin Links^{G} use the ridge-backed Largo Law as their sacred hill, whilst the legendary North Uist stone circle called Pobhuill Ffinn^{G} sets its sights on the ominously-named Eaval, a huge rocky citadel four miles to the south-east, with cairns on its summit and a cave at its heart.

Back in the south-west of England, Glastonbury is not the only magical hill with a prehistory of its own. Montacute, in Dorset, is just that – a sacred, tree-topped hill standing acute on the skyline, whilst further down John Michell's poetic Michael Line, the bizarre Burrowbridge Mump overshadows everything in its area. Nearby, the intimidating Mother hill known as Brent Knoll still clings to her dignity, despite having had her name given to the M5 services so cruelly built at the feet of this wondrous natural hill altar.

The two most beguiling of all the conical hills are not really hills at all. One is a gigantic rock called Ailsa Craig, which stands off the Ayrshire coast of western Scotland. Locally known as 'Paddy's Signpost', Ailsa Craig rises so beautifully and mysteriously out of the sea that it even inspired the builders of the Torrylin cairn on the Isle of Arran to orientate their chambers directly towards it. The other 'fake' is the bizarre changeling known as Tomen-y-Faerdre, a Silbury-lookalike from North Wales. The story of Tomen-y-Faerdre is quite unknown, for the artificial hill remains unexcavated. But its physical properties are mystifying and difficult to grasp without a visit. On the north side, Tomen-y-Faerdre is an effervescent outcrop of blue-grey rock standing at the edge of the fertile, fast-running river Alun, a neighbouring cave serving only to reinforce the pregnant mysteries of this verdant valley floor. But on its south side, Tomen-y-Faerdre changes entirely and becomes a stupendous hill altar and Silbury analogue. Its green baize appearance is completed by a shallow circular ditch and heightened by the presence of the grand Moel-y-Plas, a frighteningly similar natural Mother mountain which stands two miles to the south-west, echoing in Cinemascope the silhouette of this bizarre changeling hill.

Could it be that Tomen-y-Faerdre and Moel-y-Plas, or just 'Plas' as it is locally known, were the original inspirations for the building of Silbury? If the builders of the hill altar had had Plas as a constant horizon reference, they would have been far

TOP: Lundin Links twist and rear up in the shadow of the magical Scottish hill known as Largo Law.
ABOVE: On the Hebridean island of North Uist, the legendary stones of Pobuill Ffinn are set up in sight of Eaval, a magical hill full of caves and cairns.

BELOW: The rock of Ailsa Craig, off the western coast of Scotland, is such a bizarre phenomenon that the chambers of western Torrylin cairn, on Arran, were aligned directly at it.

MIDDLE: The mound of Tomen-y-Faedre was converted for use as a motte during the Norman Conquest, but its original use appears to have been as part of the sacred landscape of Llanarman-yn-Ial. To the left of the photograph, the local sacred hill, known as Plas, appears to have been used as a blueprint for the shape of Tomen-y-Faedre.

Suilven.

[illegible] and the Silbury Game – During the Neolithic period, northern pilgrims to Avebury travelling south of Barbury Castle [illegible] have been suddenly greeted by the chalky white summit of Silbury as they walked the last four or five miles of their jour[illegible] down the Ridgeway to the Sanctuary. As Suil the Eye Goddess (*suil* Irish 'eye'), this uncanny white apparition would have [illegible]owed the travellers as a constant companion. So careful were the architects of topographical Avebury, that Silbury is never [illegible] the traveller's sight, yet forever hidden by Waden Hill's strategic positioning and shape. Only at the Sanctuary would Sil[illegible] dumbfounding size have finally revealed itself. The Sun Goddess Sil, or Suil, was also anciently worshipped as Sulis at [illegible] Roman Bath, at Cronk Sumark on the Manx river Sulby, whilst the Sutherland mountain of Suilven is so known because [illegible] the Eye Goddess game which it plays with travellers (*see inset* © Colin Baxter).

more likely to create a vibrant and accurate analogue than if they had been merely working from memory. Yet, so great a monument as Silbury seems unlikely to have originated in a comparatively megalith-free area of North Wales.

Let us return now to the Marlborough Downs, for there is in the landscape one very specific clue which may well lead us to uncover the lost inspiration behind Silbury's creation.

The Silbury Game

As the prepared traveller walks down the Ridgeway, south of Barbury Castle, they will be able to witness a startling phenomenon – for the top portion of Silbury appears to ride on the back of Waden Hill as the traveller walks south. Even though Waden Hill is only a half-mile in length, its peculiarly obtuse angle of orientation towards the Ridgeway means that this tricky Silbury Phenomenon works all the way down to the Sanctuary, where the whole hill is finally revealed for the first time. This is the Silbury Game, and it is here, on the northern Ridgeway, that we first meet Silbury in her role as Suil, the Eye Goddess.

Imagine this wondrous Neolithic hill altar, its white chalk summit gliding sunrise-like along the smooth back of Waden Hill. Northern travellers on their way to the great Avebury ceremonies would have been in total awe for the last hours of their pilgrimage. And only at the Sanctuary, the psychological eastern beginning of the Avebury complex, would Silbury have been entirely revealed – the greatest construction in the ancient Neolithic world. On Rough Hill, a bridleway downhill to the Anglo-Saxon military road, or herepath, suggests that its roots may also have been late Neolithic, for the trackway is built on the north side of the hill, thus enabling the Silbury Game to be played. Bronze Age barrow clusters along this ridge suggest that the ceremonials continued in earnest, and the preponderance of white barrows between the Ridgeway and Waden Hill suggests that the 'game' had become even stranger by the Bronze Age. The white barrows are placed in such a way as to be level with Silbury, though they are really on the same shelf as the Ridgeway. The effect is to create about fifteen barrows on the horizon, only one of which moves to the left as you walk. As the ceremonial system expanded, the architects of Avebury were forced to construct more ceremonial pathways. Perhaps even the herepath from Wroughton/Ellandun to Overton was utilised from a former Neolithic ceremonial trackway. And others have commented on the shock of seeing Silbury rising like the sun directly above the herepath from Winterbourne Monkton.

It is the unspoken rules of the Silbury Game which give the clearest clue to the direct origins of this great mound. For nowhere except upon the Marlborough Downs did the Ancients spend so much time and preparation on the psychological effects of their monuments. And during 1995 CE, having first noticed this bizarre phenomenon the previous year, I walked every trackway upon the Downs until I understood the effect which the people of Kennet were trying to create. And having spent months at a time walking repeatedly through the Avebury landscape, one place alone seems to have been the original inspiration for the building of Silbury.

That place is upon the Yorkshire Moors in a mysterious and sacred area of forests, rivers and Neolithic trackways. And not just one but two 'pre-Silbury Silburys' work here in tandem just a few miles north of Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill, the two Neolithic mounds which Aubrey Burl had first proposed as the inspiration behind Silbury. For this reason, I suggest that the building of Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill so close together was originally intended to replicate these two proto-hill altars as purpose-built and controllable analogues alongside the Gypsey Race. The two sacred hills in question are called Blakey Topping and Howden…G

Tales of the Old Wife

There is an old *Peanuts* cartoon in which Linus is advocating a herbal remedy for some ailment or other. His sister Lucy dismisses his arguments scornfully: 'Huh, those are just old wives' tales,' and storms off. Linus yells out to her retreating figure: 'Some of those old wives were pretty sharp!' Tales of the Old Wife were once the most reliable stories of all, for she was the cunning woman, the Great Mother's most manifest representative. And if we travel north to the legendary Hole of Horcum, a breathtaking canyon, or 'valley of Hoeur', scooped out to the west of the North Yorkshire national park, there is a proto-Neolithic track known as the Old Wife's Way leading east. We are in the centre of Great Goddess territory, for everywhere hereabouts sees the earth rise and fall in stupendous land formations.

The Old Wife's Way connects the Hole of Horcum to the flat-topped hill known as Blakey Topping, an outstanding beauty in an already overwhelming region. The Ancients clearly felt equally overwhelmed, for there is a legend that the two landmarks were created during a dispute between two giants, the mythical Wade and his neighbour, whose name time has chosen to forget. During this ferocious argument, the giant Wade scooped out a great handful of soil with which to shower his adversary. But seeing Wade's intentions, the neighbour waited until the giant had launched his projectile before dodging out of the way just in time. The vast gap which Wade caused with his digging became known locally as the Hole of Horcum, while Wade's shower of earth and stones created Blakey Topping.[16] The shadowy nature of Wade's adversary suggests that he was added to the story much later in order to give Wade justification for his actions.

Just to the south beyond Grime Moor is the High Bridestones nature reserve and, as we pass along the Old Wife's Way, we soon arrive at the spring called Cargate Nab, meaning 'Koeur's Pass'. Here, Blakey Topping stands separate and magnificent and, somehow, brand new. It is as though the hill were just born, having issued from the breach at Cargate, just 800 yards away, and it is easy to imagine the Ancients having devised the Wade legend in order to understand so bizarre a piece of natural landscape.

There was once a stone circle at the foot of Blakey Topping, but now the stones are wretchedly treated as gateposts and cattle-rubbing stones – yet enough remain in their original position for us to still appreciate their builders' intentions.

Approaching from Thompson's Rigg, to the south, Blakey Topping is no longer flat-topped but a conical hill, and it is from this direction that we must investigate. For by passing east along the streams of Crosscliffe Beck and Black Beck, down towards the river Derwent, the narrow valleys eventually open out at Langdale End to reveal Blakey Topping's great sister hill, the Silbury-like Howden.

Howden is best approached from the east along Broxa Lane, for it first appears as the road cuts between the steep-sided Broxa Rigg at the north and the southern massif of North Head, rearing up at centre stage, a natural Silbury clothed in vibrant copper tones, a great treacle-toffee breast of infinite mystery. Here we are again in Bridgit territory, for Broxa is a Viking mutation of Brugsa (pronounced 'Briggsa'). Caught in the thrall of this sacred Mother hill is the tiny hamlet of Langdale End, whilst flowing south at Howden's foot is the magical river Derwent, one of four sacred British rivers so-named. There is a feeling of infinite peace upon the summit of Howden for it presents the traveller with mesmerising possibilities. This ridge-backed hill has been carefully altered to create an earthwork spine or causeway from the base of the hill right to its top, where the ridging opens out into a strange oval earthen 'bath' affair. Unexcavated and unnoticed, Howden bristles with poetic possibilities, for there is a church down in the hamlet which stands on a large artificially flattened area. If a stone circle once stood upon this land, there is certainly no longer any evidence – but with all these unanswered questions, the mystery remains wide open.

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[16] Philip Heselton, *Earth Mysteries*

The mysterious hill of Howden.

Most extraordinary of all, though, is the relationship between Howden and its sister hill, Blakey Topping, four miles away. From the summit of Howden, Blakey Topping could be mistaken for Silbury. Here, the near horizon acts just as Waden Hill does in the Avebury landscape, obscuring the lower regions of Blakey Topping and revealing its upper portion as a mysterious and floating flat-topped barrow. And climbing up to Broxa Rigg, it is possible to view both hills simultaneously – and the effect is bizarre. For, at this angle, both hills mirror Silbury perfectly – Howden in the foreground looks so sculptured and unnatural as to appear to be an especially constructed hill altar, whilst Blakey Topping rides upon the horizon.

Judging from the two hills' proximity to the Yorkshire Wolds, plus the remains of Blakey Topping's stone circle and the position of the Old Wife's Way, there was clearly ancient activity throughout this area. And from the directness of the route south from Howden along the river Derwent, it is quite probable that the Ancients of the Yorkshire Wolds had been aware of these two natural hills since the Mesolithic period, and perhaps even before that. The southern course of the Derwent joins the river Hertford, which then flows right past Starr Carr,[17] the most famous Mesolithic settlement in all of Britain. If the Starr Carr population had gained a knowledge of farming, or if incoming Neolithics had learned of the two mysterious hill altars deep in the forest, it is only logical that they should have wished to create Ba'l Hill and Willy Howe along the Gypsey Race as analogues of their former Great Goddess hills. The fertile flinty openness of the Wolds would have contrasted severely with the difficult farming and intractability of their former sacred area. Chopping down trees with flint axes was a slow, exhausting affair. It would have been much better, surely, to have been able to attend to the new monuments within this new controllable landscape. Indeed, control was their key. But in moving south the new people of the Wolds may have temporarily forgotten the innate mystery of their two Mother hills, caught in the unknowable forests at the north, and possibly still active as the home of some much smaller community. But the degree of control which the Ancients had gained by moving southwards on to the Wolds would have been immeasurable – less travel, better farming, specially made hill altars which could exert their quiet magic upon the surrounding harvest, and all within a centralised landscape upon which the whole community could participate.

The ruined stone circle at the foot of Blakey Topping, in the North Yorkshire National Park, is reached along the Old Wife's Way.

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[17] Starr Carr appears on the Gypsey Race map at 3. c) 5

Sunset over Dunnideer.

CHAPTER

eight

Fifty-Nine Stone Circles in Aberdeenshire

Recumbent awhile in Grampian

General Sickness Notes of 23rd July : The Lodge at My Lord's Throat, Moneymusk, Grampian. We've been stuck indoors these past days ... 'flu struck us all down. *The Modern Antiquarian* trip fell to pieces and we began to think that the Recumbent stone circles might not even exist...
(AMETHYST FIELDNOTES, SUMMER '92 CE)

When I first came to Aberdeenshire I was not a well man. It was at the end of a five-week-long pilgrimage around the stones of the Highlands and Islands of northern Scotland, singing for my supper to New-Agers at Findhorn, oil men in Invergordon and berserk ferry-workers at a Thurso motel, plus shows on Skye and Orkney, finally ending here at Aberdeen. But the forty-five megalithic sites which we had visited, mostly with our stoic baby Albany, had often been in more out of the way places than at equivalent sites down in England and, one month into our odyssey, it was all taking its toll. On Skye, on the Orkneys and at Callanish, we had pushed and pushed to any reachable stones, unsure when we would next return, knowing that Aberdeen was at the end of it all and still an unknown entity.

We had planned this trip many months before and had chosen to finish in Grampian for two reasons: it was the most confounding megalithic region in all of Britain in terms of sheer size and proliferation of stone circles – and it was also one of the least written about. Guidebooks usually sent the traveller to no more than seven of the Grampian circles, though I knew that there had once been over 150 of them. I presumed that they were all gone, or had been so battered as to be now unrecognisable as stone circles. As it transpired, three separate visits would be necessary to even vaguely uncover what the Neolithics of Aberdeenshire had achieved. There was just too much of everything everywhere in this Mother-endowed place.

But, in our present state, the unspecified nature of Aberdeenshire's prehistory was the worst thing for us all. Everywhere else, I had kept to a rigorous itinerary. On the Orkneys, Thursday 7 a.m. was Rousay, Friday was Westray, Saturday was Hoy, and so on. But here? There was so much to see that we became overwhelmed and, when the 'flu caught up with us, the break we all needed really hit us hard.

As I lay mute and immobilised in a creaky Victorian bed with its soft lumpen mattress, my overwhelming thought was a determination to get us all home. I had no desire whatsoever to attempt even a reconnaissance of this area without perfect health and the motivation which that brings, for this was likely to be our most daunting task yet. Our cottage was a Hansel & Gretel half-timbered lodge on the outskirts of Bennachie Forest close to the river Don. This area was called My Lord's Throat because of a strange and wonderful mist, or 'breath', which appeared on that part of the river every morning. But there had been a large dead bat on our doorstep when we arrived. And it was damp inside and full of crane flies, those huge slow-moving things – all legs and thorax – that judder along and then fall into your soup.

Three days seems endless to the traveller brought down mid-quest, and I soon sunk deeper. While we were all ill and in bed, I decided to beat my depression and do more research in order to be totally equipped for the time when our health and energy returned. But the local guidebooks which we had just bought were hazy and uninformed and horribly general, suggesting stone circles in the same breath as hillforts, and not mentioning many of either. I had marked all the circles on the maps, but that only made it more difficult – there were hundreds of them. In Aubrey Burl's *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*, using a sliding scale of one to five in order to denote each stone circle's state, from completeness all the way to utter destruction, he had rated most of the Grampian circles with the numbers four or five. What did that mean? Were they all gone? Which did we choose to visit first? It was unfathomably mysterious and exhausting to even consider – like trying to get into reggae in a weekend.

In the light of our subsequent three years of investigations, that fieldnote written at the beginning of this chapter seems laughable now. For the Recumbent stone circles, or RSCs as they are often known, were to become a great and burning obsession with us. Eventually, three days after we arrived, in an effort to at least begin somewhere, we chose to visit a few of the show sites first. But as we stepped out of the lodge on 23rd July 1992 CE we could have no idea of the consequences of that first visit to the fine Aberdeenshire stone circle known as East Aquhorthies…

The Recumbent stone circles of Grampian

After that first day at East Aquhorthies,[G] we knew we were in trouble. The stone circle was an outrageous feast of deep red granite with veins of quartz, pink porphyry, and combinations of local dark and pale grey granites. It stood in a modern walled embankment and looked out on to the fine sacred mountain known as the Mither Tap, or 'Mother Tit'. I disliked most restored 'show sites', but this was so genuinely unlike any stone circle that I had ever seen before that the restoration acted in its favour, and seeing a 'perfect' example first was clearly necessary in order to understand the stylised rules which these Grampian Neolithics had imposed on their circle building.

Many of the Recumbent stone circles followed a fairly repeatable pattern of construction and a circle would often be built high on the south-westerly shelf of a river valley with a clearly defined southern horizon. The great Recumbent stone, examples of which could weigh over fifty tons and stand eight feet tall when they were still lying on their side,[1] would then be dragged into place at the south-west, overlooking the edge of the landscape. At either side of these Recumbents, tall pillars or 'flankers' would be erected, each one abutting the Recumbent stone to create a central altar akin to the head of a half-buried megalithic hare. The smallest stone in the entire circle would then be placed directly opposite the Recumbent, like a nervous small child addressing their head teacher. Unconfirmed reports of long causeways terminating at these north-easterly smallest stones[2] would suggest that initiates arriving here then viewed selected southern lunar events by looking across the false horizon created by the Recumbent and its flankers.

Like the monuments of Callanish, the Recumbent stone circles have implicit lunar orientation. And though the divided opinions of archaeo-astronomers equivocate between 'high accuracy' and 'merely symbolic' for these monuments' astronomical uses, by simply visiting the sites the traveller immediately notices the deep psychology in the placing of the Recumbent & flankers in opposition to the tiniest stone in the ring. For this image is like a hugely overstated interpretation of the Triple Goddess addressed by the phallic stone at Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag.[G] Considered in this manner, the flankers are degraded forms of the Maiden at left and the Hag at right, downsized into mere attendants of the central and stupendously engorged Mother stone, here courted by the tiny phallus set up opposite. Up here at 57° latitude, the moon dances across the sky very close to the horizon, and great effort was made by the builders of certain Aberdeenshire circles to graphically describe their obsession with all things lunar by creating the false horizon of the Recumbent so that it mirrored the shape of the near horizon.[3] But judging by the vast numbers of Recumbent stone circles which did not fit so precisely into the lunar criterion, it seems fairly clear that whilst some perfectly placed sites were extremely accurate and majorly inspiring for the whole cult, there were others for which the astronomy simply could not have worked. Perhaps the attempt was enough – when Isambard Kingdom Brunel tried to align Box railway tunnel to his own birthday sunrise, he failed. But the attempt was enough, and everyone still talks as though he succeeded. Seeing any arbitrary sunrise or full moon over any megalithic site is a powerful dreamlike experience. Who knows of the power which would have been invested in the person who could anciently have provided a step-by-step narration of Luna's coming movements as she danced intricately across the sky?

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[1] Hawk Hill stone circle at O.S. 37.605242 is gone now, but its Recumbent remains on the hillside under a tree, an unfeasibly large stone which dwarfs even the legendary Old Keig. The easiest approach is from the farm at Loanend.

[2] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles.* On page 183, Burl writes: 'One strange feature of a few circles to the east of the Correen Hills near Alford is the reputed presence of a causeway leading to the site on the side opposite the recumbent.'

That these circles had possibly had such specific uses was very empowering to grasp, and we travelled to Loanhead of Daviot,[G] another 'show site' which I had long dreamed of. I was caught transfixed by the order of these Grampian circle-builders – their dedication to a fastidious tradition whilst keeping so much of their own style. At Midmar Kirk,[G] a church and cemetery had been built around the circle, but even the manicuring and roadway had failed to Christianise the site. A wonderful metaphor for Midmar Kirk's social position happened as I stood taking photographs of the circle. The verger's middle-aged autistic daughter came running up, gesticulating wildly, and started hugging me. Her enthusiasm summed up the untameable Sarah Miles nature of this crackling, cackling, mordant place, alive with conflicting energies.

Around a mile to the east of Midmar, the thin Recumbent stone of Sunhoney circle[G] had fallen inwards, revealing thirty-one cup-marks, suggesting that these may have been carvings of various lunar movements.[4] This circle was situated in a glamorous antiquarian copse on the welcoming Sunhoney farm, and the farmer's wife later handwrote all that she personally knew about the circle and posted it to me. Both the Sunhoney and Midmar circles were sighted on the great eminence to the south known as the Hill of Fare, a sacred place of Ver.

Because of their shapes and specific methods of construction, it soon became clear that a visit to a Recumbent stone circle could be an adventure to a hand-picked wonderland, for the Ancients placed their monuments with such care and accuracy that the traveller seemed always guaranteed to end up in some pastoral award-winning scenery. The precise nature of the construction of each monument meant that detective work could almost always reveal the original shape of the complete circle, and the orientation of the bigger circles was almost always to the south-west. At South Ley Lodge, all that remained of the circle were the Recumbent and flankers standing in a deep crop. Yet this simple archetypal image remained far more powerful than other stone circles elsewhere in Britain which were technically more complete. South of Oldmeldrum, the ruinous Kirkton of Bourtie,[5] though trashed and stranded in deep crops, still seemed proud and dignified in the lea of the Hill of Barra, its missing circle stones incorporated into the nearby field wall and gateway.

And as the remaining days tumbled, there were so many stone circles to choose from that I was reduced to picking monuments with good names. Tyrebagger[G] was a heavy metal circle standing high above Aberdeen airport, its ten-foot square Recumbent stone sprayed with graffiti, and shattered beer bottles littering the central area. Yet Tyrebagger was a mystical giant of a circle and a strange calm hung over it, despite its proximity to a huge radar aerial.

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[3] Two examples of Recumbent stones which mirror the horizon can be found at Hatton of Ardoyne at 38.6597 and Balquain at 7. a) 5

[4] Aubrey Burl, *A Guide to the Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany*

[5] Kirkton of Bourtie is found at O.S. 38.801249

The stone circle of East Aquhorthies employs many exquisite and different types of stone.

South Ley Lodge circle stranded in a field of [illegible]
[illegible]: Sunset over Kirkton of Bourtie.

The legendary Loanhead of Daviot stone circle has a ring-cairn
[illegible]

Soon after, we arrived at Old Keig,[G] a stone circle of great legend in Aberdeenshire, not least because of its gigantic 'foreign' Recumbent made of sillimanite gneiss, which had been dragged up the final half-mile 1:14 gradient from the river Don below. I had heard that Old Keig was horribly ruined and that only the southern portion of the stone circle remained. But on arrival, after journeying down the wide tree-lined antiquarian avenue, I was so shell-shocked by the outrageous size and hull-like shape of that Old Keig Recumbent and its flankers that even if everything but these three stones had been taken away, it would hardly have affected the enormous impact of that 'rude stone altar'. The Recumbent was truly a flaming and inspirational design, with chock stones placed under its eastern end which would have allowed the builders to make the top surface perfectly horizontal.

Our time finally ran out at Tomenaverie.[G] This natural sacred rocky outcrop was surmounted by a fine stone circle now horribly overthrown and wretched. Indeed, the whole of Tomenaverie had been so heavily quarried that there were in places only three feet between the standing stones and the fast approaching cliffs. As we left for our home in Wiltshire, our four days had bewildered and jostled us. We had visited the great subterranean storage house at Culsh and the great cairn north at Memsie and even the charming cairn-circle at Cullerie[G] – but all were presently overshadowed by the beautiful patterns created by these ancient Recumbent stone circles. Lying shivering amongst the stones, I wrote a poem called 'On Tomenaverie' and declaimed it loudly in the gusts of this freezing late-July day. Then we ran for shelter to the car and drove south, knowing that next year would inevitably drag us right back to this place.

Softly softly

And so we returned the next year. And also the year after that. I quickly understood that only endless visiting, looking and onsite note-taking at the circles themselves could make up for the lack of written records. At the beginning of the 1900s, the archaeologist Fred Coles had excavated many of the Grampian sites and succeeded in bringing the circles out of their permanent shadow. From 1897 to 1911, Coles had been Assistant Keeper at the National Museum of Antiquities in Scotland and it was his gallant efforts which had done so much to elevate the RSCs in the eyes of early British archaeology. Coles had also made a study of the highly enigmatic carved stone balls discovered mainly in Aberdeenshire. The Towie ball, which is the most famous and perfect example, is only one of 169 stone balls discovered in this area.

But Fred Coles' work had been too national to be specific to Grampian, having ranged as far south as Croft Moraig and the Perthshire circles. And Alexander Keiller, the future restorer of Avebury, had written various long tracts on the RSCs, but nothing had ever been published. Where was the Margaret Curtis of Aberdeenshire? Was there no one person dedicating their lives purely to these critical monuments? Without such a person living virtually on site, Aberdeenshire was destined to remain forever just out of reach. As usual, it had been left to the mighty Aubrey Burl[6] to shed some light on this seeming fathomable region.

In the Neolithic period, there had been far more stone circles in Grampian than anywhere else in Britain, including such places as Cornwall, which had formerly had around thirty stone circles, and Cumbria, which had had over sixty. But Grampian's 150-plus stone circles, most of which were examples of those fabulous RSCs, had remained unvisited and unexplored by modern travellers. We decided that by plotting our itineraries very carefully, we could set out to systematically visit all of the great remaining stone circles, plus the skeletons or even just the sites of those which seemed pertinent to our particular quest. The following years were spent in a slow trawl around the sites. And after three consecutive Aberdeenshire trips, we had visited fifty-nine stone circles and at last were beginning to glimpse the enormity of these ancient achievements.

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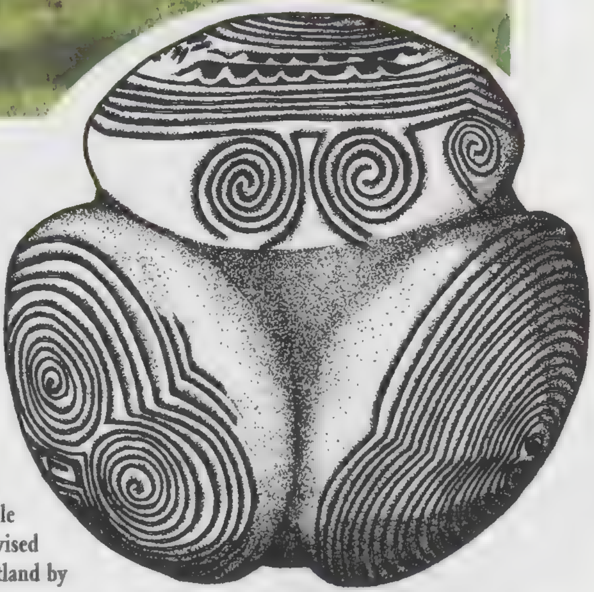
[6] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles* and *A Guide to the Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany*

The stones of Old Keig.



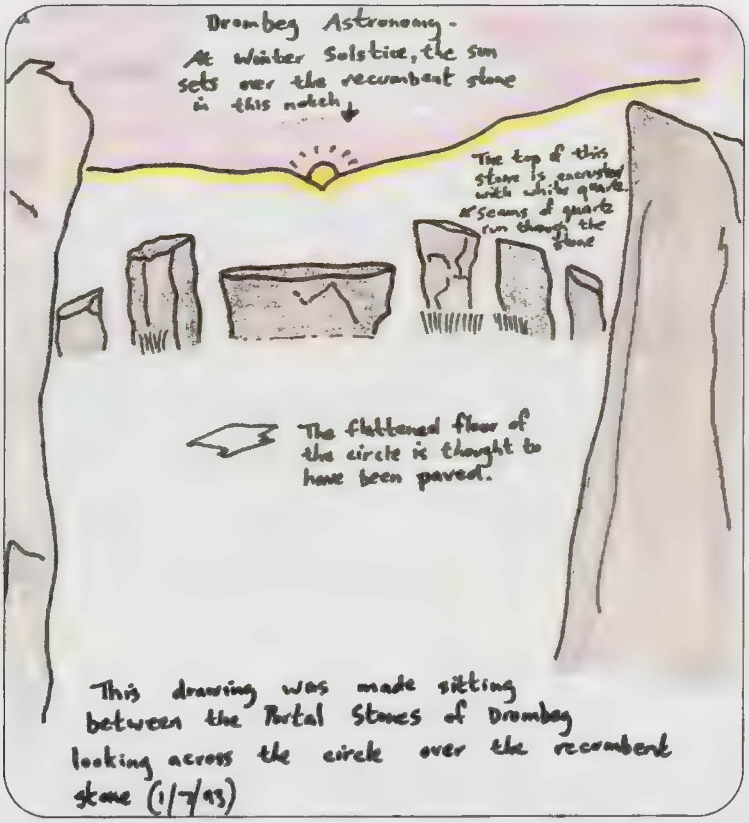
169 STONE BALLS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

The magnificent Towie Ball (CIRCLED RIGHT) is the finest example of 169 similar Neolithic carved balls discovered in the past two centuries of Grampian excavation. Throughout the 19th century, scholars made only rudimentary studies of these balls, presupposing that they held no geometry other than the intuitive form naturally created by the palms of their ancient artist. It was in 1911, when the ubiquitous Fred Coles delivered his famous paper on the subject, that a general interest was first sparked. Though many of the balls had been only sloppily rendered, and some of them were discovered in an unfinished state, certain examples were so exquisitely executed as to suggest the possible involvement of precise geometry. Dorothy Marshall's work revised Coles' number of finds from 180 in 1911 to 387 throughout Scotland by 1976, and her work allowed more examples to be tested for geometric properties. In his 1979 book *Time Stands Still*, the architect Keith Critchlow suggested that the balls revealed arcane knowledge of Pythagorean solids over two millennia before Pythagoras' time. Whilst the Towie Ball is by far the finest of these balls yet discovered, there are many others which feature remarkable carvings. Concentrations of spirals proliferate amongst the most elegant-looking examples, but chevrons, zig-zags and serpentine lines also appear alongside triangular carvings and intricate leaf patterns. One ball looks exactly like a model of a Buck Rogers spaceship, whilst another has carvings virtually identical to the spiral pathway up the Marlborough Mount. The strangest of all has hundreds and hundreds of lines of intricate workings of soft-edged squares all over its surface, like some arcane miniature printing press. Even the more rudimentary designs are astounding for the obvious effort involved, whilst those rendered in particularly attractive stone defy time and place. Indeed, the Callanish visionary Margaret Curtis has been a carver of similar stones for many years. Her efforts so far, achieved in Neolithic fashion as part of her field-tests, have created some superb sandstone artefacts. Margaret chose sandstone because forty-three carved stones have so far been discovered in this material. Other types of stone involved were quartzites, greenstones, diorites, dolerites and basalts. Three balls were even carved from hornblende, the extraordinary multi-faceted crystal found at Callanish – such a choice would have made an already difficult task almost impossible.

Torhousekie & some Recumbent stone circles in Southern Ireland

Of course, as befits such a strange cult as the RSCs, their story is also one of influence and migration, both in geography and in meaning. For these lunar Grampian circles were to influence a whole new cult of solar RSCs in the Ross-Carbery area at the very south of Ireland. Here, large rugged RSCs were erected at a latitude far too south for any lunar obsevation. In fact, the Irish antiquary Jack Roberts has shown that the midwinter sun sets in a notch directly behind the Recumbent stone at the Irish Drombeg circle – from moon worship in Aberdeenshire to sun worship at Ross-Carbery.

But like any trans-cultural 'copy', the Irish RSCs were not intended as a perfect rendering of their Grampian inspirations and a good deal of Irish traditions made these Ross-Carbery monuments specifically themselves. The Recumbent at Drombeg is a hefty, perfectly flat stone with graded shaped uprights rising up and up on either side in celebration of the flankers. Opposite the Recumbent is a Cumbrian-type portal entrance, featuring large double pillars placed extremely close together. This extra height, conspiring with the greatly reduced diameters of the Irish RSCs, gives a slightly claustrophobic atmosphere. The Drombeg stones are extremely bulky, as are the stones of Bohonagh (pronounced 'Boner'), high upon their hilltop next to a small dolmen and ancient settlement. At Derrentaggart, the Recumbent is a slight, megalithic tea-biscuit of a stone, yet again the extra height made the circle feel crowded.[7]


Drombeg Astronomy -
At Winter Solstice, the sun sets over the recumbent stone in this notch
The top of this stone is encrusted with white quartz.
& Seams of quartz run through the stone
The flattened floor of the circle is thought to have been paved.
This drawing was made sitting between the Portal Stones of Drombeg looking across the circle over the recumbent stone (1/7/93)

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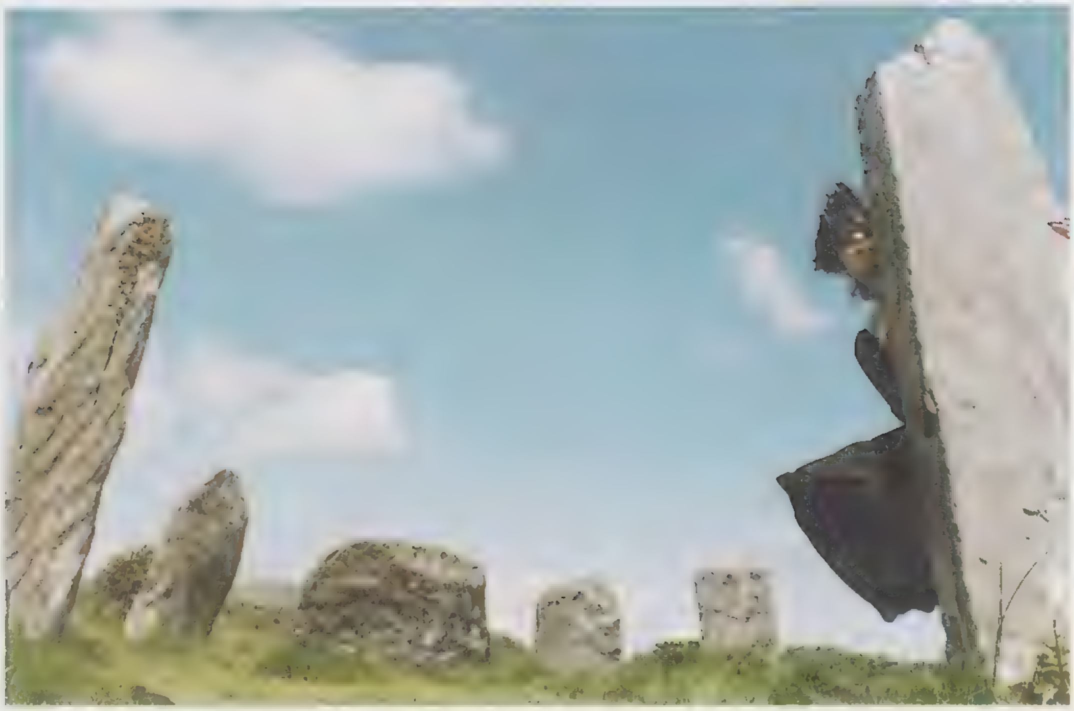
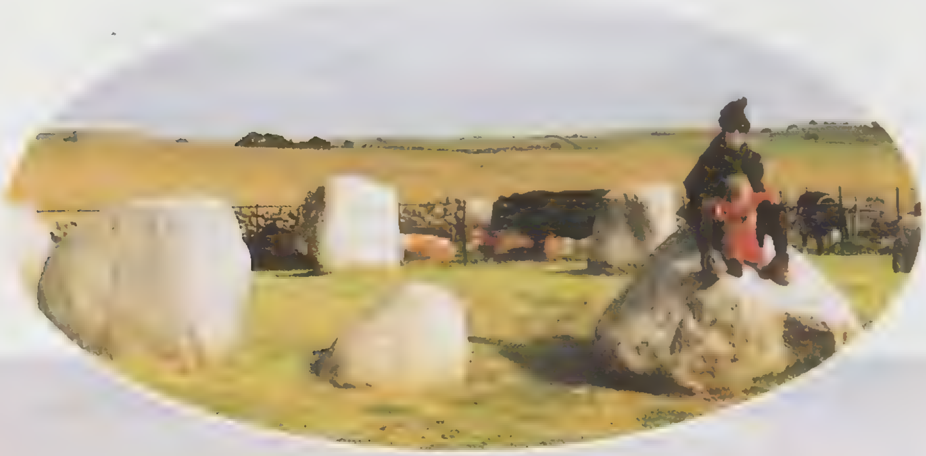
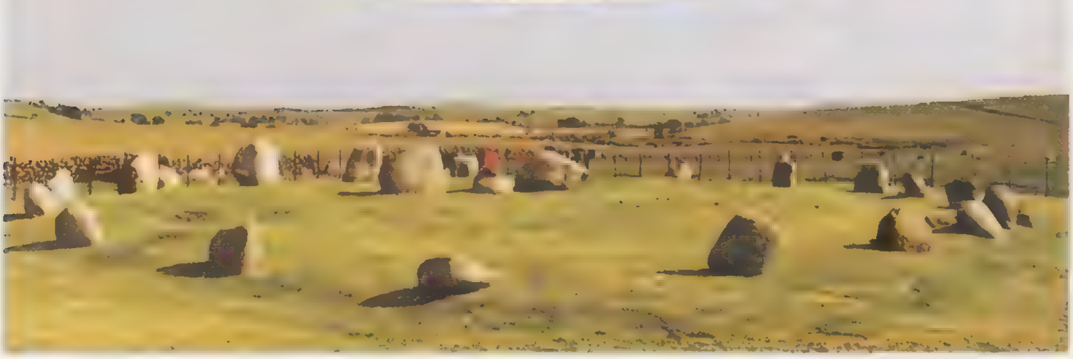
[7] I speak as a complete novice of Irish Recumbent stone circles. In Ireland, using Irish O.S. maps, I have been unable to find more circles than I have been able to find – a tragedy considering the beautiful settings of each circle I did manage to find. I would suggest that the Irish RSCs of the Ross-Carbery area were created by immigrants from the Grampian area, since the obsession with orientation seems to be only among the Aberdeen builders. This suggests that the Irish monuments are a decadent form of the original – stylistically similar through tradition, but no longer so full of meaning to their builders.



ABOVE: At Derentaggart in the south-west of Ireland, the Recumbent stone is barely more than twice the width of the other uprights.
BELOW: Aubrey Burl has identified Torhousekie stone circle, near Wigtown Bay, in the low west of Scotland, as an errant Recumbent stone circle.
BOTTOM: Like the Fortingall circles of Perthshire, the three-stone setting in the foreground appears to have roots in Aberdeenshire.





The Recumbent stone circles of Ross-Carbery are linked to their Aberdeenshire progenitors by mutant RSCs placed at Fortingall,G on the eastern flood-plain of Strath Tay, and further west at Torhousekie,G at Wigtown Bay. Both of these famous Neolithic stations saw sustained water traffic throughout the period and both areas feature many different examples of megalithic monuments. Torhousekie is a deceptively large stone circle in an incredible agricultural area permeated with natural mounds, or 'drumlins'. In the centre there sits a diminutive 'Recumbent' with two great distended 'flankers', as though the circle was trying to be a compressed and inflated Japanese superhero version of those same equivalent stones at Balgorkar.G Aubrey Burl has pointed out the same feature at the mainly destroyed three rings of Fortingall, deep in the high wet grasses at the Appin of Dull. Burl is clearly right, for the later Aberdeenshire circles did themselves buck the trend from time to time until, over a long period of time, the Recumbent stones became loose from their moorings at the edge of the circle and gradually mutated inwards and turned into strangely orientated centre settings.

But despite all of this outside activity, it was the Aberdeenshire landscape, with its perfect lunar latitude and plethora of high south-westerly river terraces, which had created the Recumbent stone circles. And it is to the sacred omphalos which we must now travel – to a lost paradise, and I'm telling no lies.

Dunnideer & the sacred Aberdeenshire landscape

Bang in the middle of the Great Mother's heart – that's how it feels to stand in the sacred Aberdeenshire landscape. And there is a series of sacred hill and earth features around the village of Insch which are such stars of the yin/yang principle that had they not been so obscurely placed, they would have rivalled the Avebury area. Certainly their position is something of a great tragedy, for the beauty of this landscape is healing to the eye and the Ancients clearly felt inspired to have built such an outrageous number of Recumbent stone circles here. Far too few people are aware of this overachieving ritual centre, which stretches for megalithic miles & miles.

The greatest of the Aberdeenshire monuments were clustered around a series of exquisitely placed Mother hills, ranging east-south-east over a distance of around twelve miles. The sacred omphalos of all Aberdeenshire is the magical hill known as Dunnideer. For it is Dunnideer, with its Glastonbury shape, which beckons travellers distant miles away to cautiously visit, and whose conical form rises Silbury-like on the far horizon of so many of these RSCs. The 13th-century tower castle upon Dunnideer's summit is ruined in a perfectly Glastonbury way – archetypal and wildly inspiring from all sides, however far away. Also, like the brick obelisk monstrosity on top of Cherhill Down near Avebury,G it helps modern explorers to get their ancient bearings in a modern road culture of constant disorientation.

Close to Dunnideer stand the Hill of Flinders and the Hill of Christ's Kirk, two green pyramid-like hills which were both anciently settled. From the road close to Ardlair stone circleG to the great Triple Goddess hill arrangement of Dunnideer, Flinders and Christ's Kirk, the view is like a miniature natural analogue of the three great pyramids at Giza – the landscape hereabouts has a deep and timeless holiness about it.

On either side of the Dunnideer scenery stand two stupendous holy hills. Tap O'Noth, 'the Northern tit', stands at the far west, and this towering recumbent Great Mother acts as a massive boundary wall, past which the western sacred landscape was not continued. Far to the east stand the hills of Bennachie, ranging east–west, strung-out and looming with a blackness of brooding only surpassed by the shrieking Mither Tap, or 'Mother Tit'. This great sacred hill with its ancient Maiden Causeway defines the south-east Dunnideer landscape. And it is within these natural Mother-land temples that a great many of the Recumbent stone circles stood. Indeed, the sheer sacred beauty of their environment seems to have given the builders a psychological lift and inspired the superiority of the circles' design.

The twelve circles of Dunnideer

Dunnideer is everywhere. Two stone circles stand in the lea of the hill, one named after Dunnideer itself while the other, more famous site is called Stonehead. The Dunnydeer (sic) circle[G] stands in high ferns, surrounded by crops, but the atmosphere is spectacular and the great Recumbent has split crossways along the rock strata to create the effect of a megalithic wafer sandwich. At Stonehead,[G] the overwhelmed traveller faces both Dunnideer, one mile to the east, and the form of Tap O'Noth on the glowering western horizon. Behind Stonehead, at the top of Coldhome, stands the stone circle of Candle Hill[8] which, from its name, was surely once a site of great beacon fires. Indeed, the name Coldhome itself is a mutation of 'Cauldhame, the palace of the faeries'.[9] This extraordinarily-placed circle is now entirely recumbent, the recumbent Recumbent more buried than recumbent. Yet, from Candle Hill circle, the view through sparse foliage aims straight for Dunnideer, whilst Tap O'Noth boils the blood with wonder as it starkly holds the entire western horizon, like a Great Goddess super-tanker about to engulf the worshipper.

Wheeling clockwise around Dunnideer, we cross the valley of the river Shevock whose name has the same root as the river Severn. Here at the south-east, Dunnideer overlooks the great ruin at Wantonwells, high up on Dead Man's Howe. At some time during the 19th century, the landowner of nearby Sleepytown Farm dragged each stone from its place and made them all into a field cairn around the huge Recumbent, which tilts like some great flattened megalithic rugby ball. These stone circles are all in varying stages of dilapidation, but the landscape always binds the traveller's feet and ankles firmly to the ground. One of the Insch churches looks ideally placed to have been the site of a former stone circle whilst, just over a mile to the north of Dunnideer, the Inschfield stone circle still watches the sacred hill from its crop, the huge Recumbent and a single upright flanker presenting a still-unbeaten-hero of a monument which has managed to survive being built in this ideal farmland.

These are Dunnideer's primary circles for they stand caught entirely in the thrall of this great Mother hill. But there were formerly at least six other known circles whose builders had made strenuous efforts to ensure a glimpse of Dunnideer from their monuments. The most peculiar example is at Ardlair[G] to the west, with its dark gun-metal grey Recumbent and nearby Pictish symbol stones, for it is the sleeping figure of Tap O'Noth, three-and-a-half miles away, which truly dominates this scene. Here the ubiquitous Dunnideer here unites with the Hill O'Christ's Kirk and the Hill of Flinders as a magical but gentle Triple Goddess.

Two now-destroyed stone circles once stood around three miles to the north of Dunnideer, one on the farmlands of St. Sairs and the other in the cemetery of Kirkton of Culsalmond.[10] St. Sairs is all gone except for a few remnants of granite still alarmingly scattered around, but the view of Dunnideer remains direct and unhindered between the Hill of Knockenbaird and the gentle slopes of Green Law. Leaning against a stone wall is a 'particularly large possible upright, which was tooled at the "bottom". Back in the farmyard … a huge block of rose quartz and next to it a conical topped upright about two-feet-tall.'[11] The stones of the Culsalmond circle (pronounced 'Culsa Mond') remained standing until the last year of the 18th century, at which time the whole monument was buried where it stood in order to make way for cemetery extensions.[12] Ironically, the pagan magic of this place still remains – standing in the cemetery on the site of this expertly placed stone circle, the traveller can still just glimpse the tiny citadel of Dunnideer three-and-a-half miles away, the hills of Flinders and Christ's Kirk hidden behind the horizon created by nearby Fallow Hill.

The remaining Dunnideer stone circles owe their main allegiance to Bennachie and the Mither Tap to the east. Old Rayne stone circle above Broombrae stands on another Candle Hill, its high south-westerly shelf overlooking the river Urie with a spectacular view due south to the

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[8] Candle Hill stone circle is at O.S. 37.599299

[9] Jennifer Westwood, *Albion*

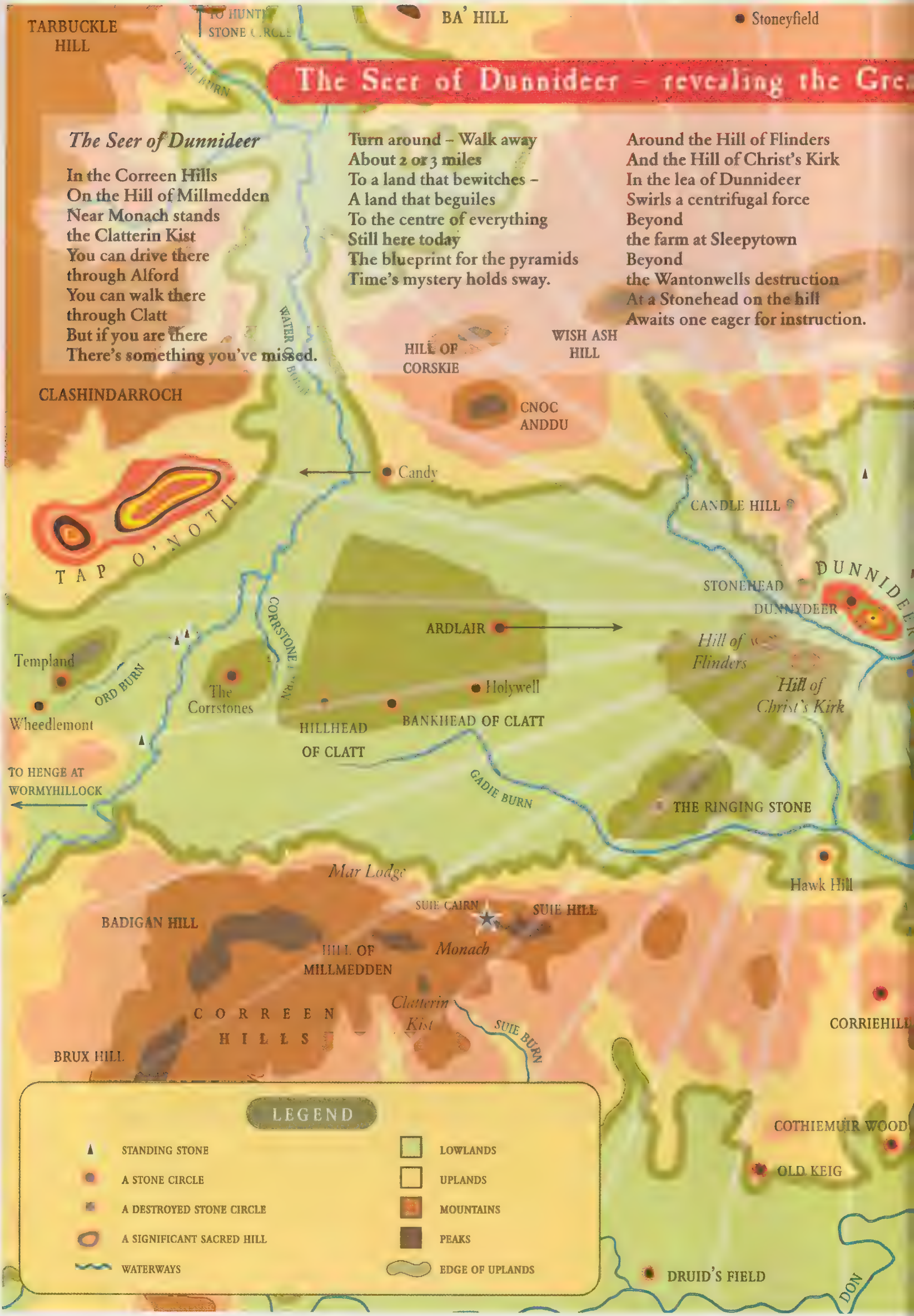
[10] Kirkton of Culsalmond is at O.S. 37.648327

[11] Author's journal, Rhodochrosite Fieldnotes, 1994 CE

[12] Ross Leckie, *Grampian*

Stonehead was placed directly between the two most sacred hills in the landscape.

The Seer of Dunnideer – revealing the Gre



The Seer of Dunnideer

In the Correen Hills
On the Hill of Millmedden
Near Monach stands
the Clatterin Kist
You can drive there
through Alford
You can walk there
through Clatt
But if you are there
There's something you've missed.

Turn around – Walk away
About 2 or 3 miles
To a land that bewitches –
A land that beguiles
To the centre of everything
Still here today
The blueprint for the pyramids
Time's mystery holds sway.

Around the Hill of Flinders
And the Hill of Christ's Kirk
In the lea of Dunnideer
Swirls a centrifugal force
Beyond
the farm at Sleepytown
Beyond
the Wantonwells destruction
At a Stonehead on the hill
Awaits one eager for instruction.

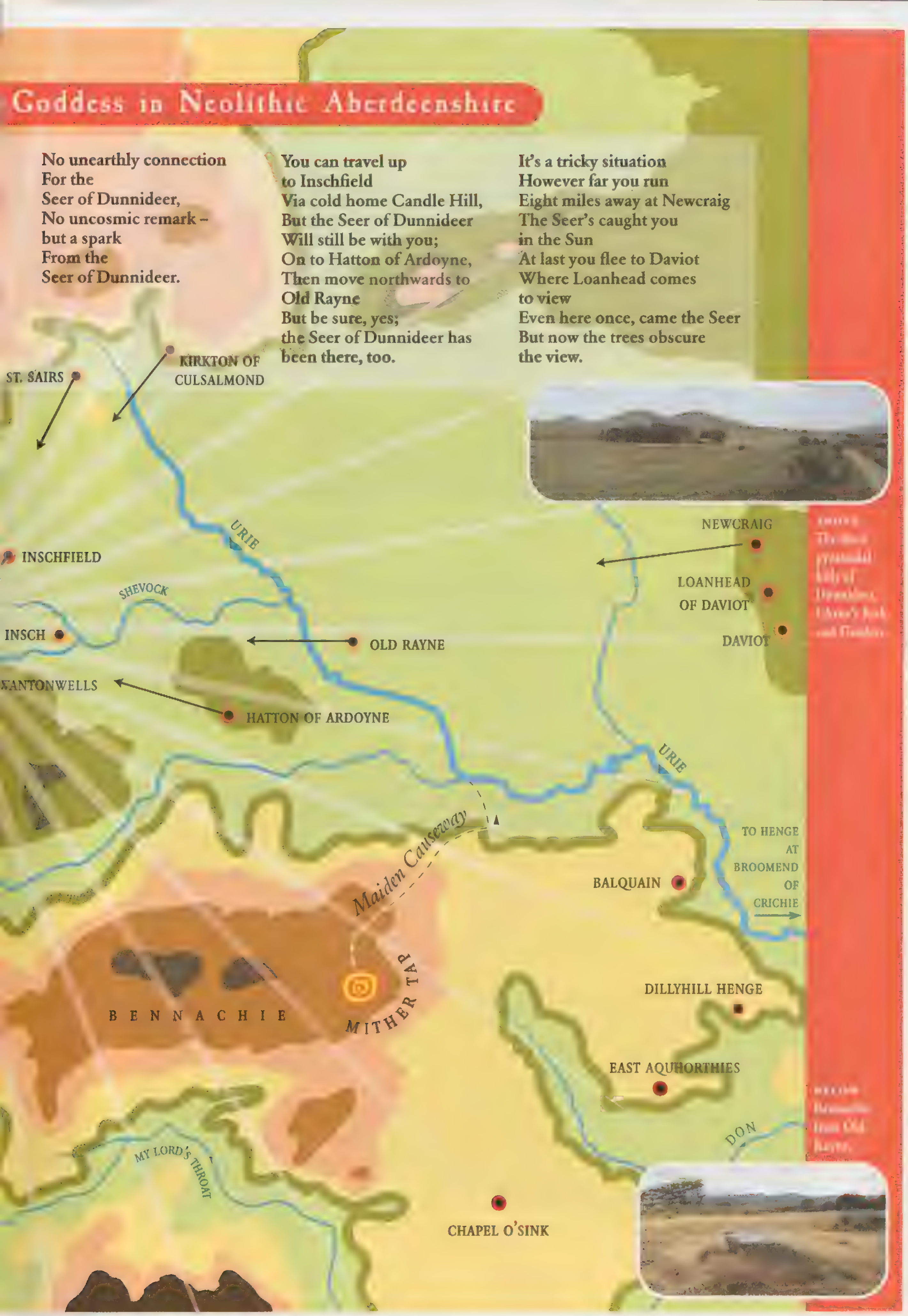
TARBUCKLE HILL
TO HUNT
STONE CIRCLE
CORI BURN
BA' HILL
Stoneyfield
WATER OF BOGIE
HILL OF CORSKIE
WISH ASH HILL
CNOC ANDDU
CLASHINDARROCH
Candy
TAP O' NOTH
CANDLE HILL
DUNNIDE
STONEHEAD
DUNNYDEER
ARDLAIR
Hill of Flinders
Hill of Christ's Kirk
Templand
ORD BURN
The Corrstones
CORRSTONE BURN
Holywell
Wheedlemont
HILLHEAD OF CLATT
BANKHEAD OF CLATT
TO HENGE AT WORMYHILLOCK
GADIE BURN
THE RINGING STONE
Hawk Hill
Mar Lodge
SUIE CAIRN
SUIE HILL
BADIGAN HILL
HILL OF MILLMEDDEN
Monach
Clatterin Kist
CORREEN HILLS
SUIE BURN
BRUX HILL
CORRIEHILL
COTHIEMUIR WOOD
OLD KEIG
DRUID'S FIELD
DON
LEGEND
STANDING STONE
A STONE CIRCLE
A DESTROYED STONE CIRCLE
A SIGNIFICANT SACRED HILL
WATERWAYS
LOWLANDS
UPLANDS
MOUNTAINS
PEAKS
EDGE OF UPLANDS

Goddess in Neolithic Aberdeenshire

No unearthly connection
For the
Seer of Dunnideer,
No uncosmic remark –
but a spark
From the
Seer of Dunnideer.

You can travel up
to Inschfield
Via cold home Candle Hill,
But the Seer of Dunnideer
Will still be with you;
On to Hatton of Ardoyne,
Then move northwards to
Old Rayne
But be sure, yes;
the Seer of Dunnideer has
been there, too.

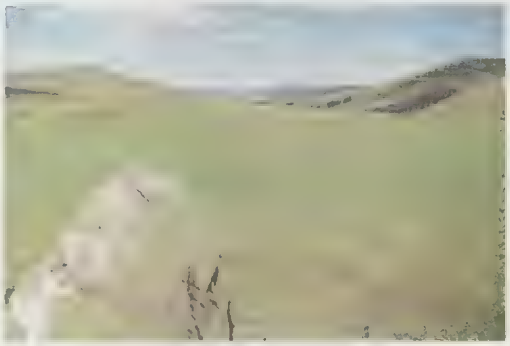
It's a tricky situation
However far you run
Eight miles away at Newcraig
The Seer's caught you
in the Sun
At last you flee to Daviot
Where Loanhead comes
to view
Even here once, came the Seer
But now the trees obscure
the view.

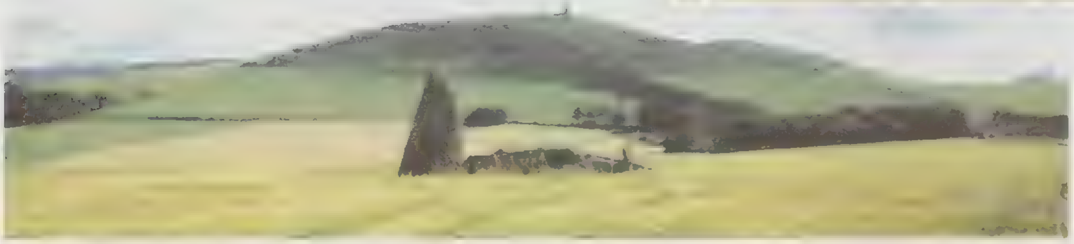

ST. SAIRS
KIRKTON OF CULSALMOND
URIE
INSCHFIELD
SHEVOCK
INSCH
OLD RAYNE
WANTONWELLS
HATTON OF ARDOYNE
NEWCRAIG
LOANHEAD OF DAVIOT
DAVIOT
URIE
Maiden Causeway
TO HENGE AT BROOMEND OF CRICHIE
BALQUAIN
BENNACHIE
MITHER TAP
DILLYHILL HENGE
EAST AQUHORTHIES
DON
MY LORD'S THROAT
CHAPEL O'SINK

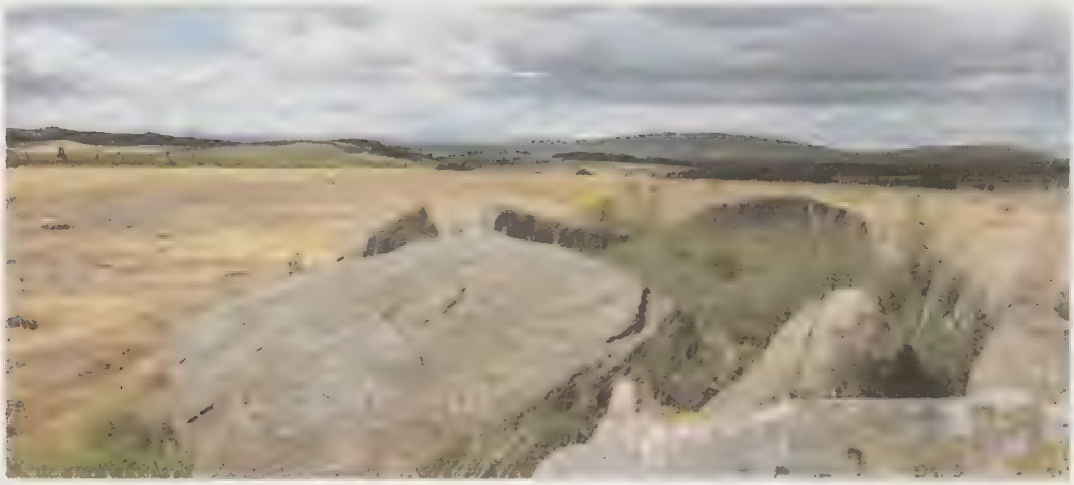
ABOVE The three pyramidal hills of Dunnideer, [illegible] and [illegible].

BELOW Bennachie from Old Rayne.

TOP LEFT AND CENTRE: The high stone circle on the summit of Candle Hill has powerful views to Dunnideer and Tap O'Noth.
RIGHT: The wrecked stones of Wantonwells overlook Dunnideer, at the near north-west.
TOP RIGHT: Dunnideer rises behind Insch church.
BOTTOM: Inschfield stone circle stands to the north east of Dunnideer, which changes shape considerably from this angle. And, like Balquain and Hatton of Ardoyne, notice how the Recumbent stone appears to have been chosen to mirror the summit of Dunnideer.







Dunnideer and Tap O'Noth appear united on the far horizon at Old Rayne stone circle. In actuality, the two sacred hills are six miles apart.

Mither Tap. Yet this once huge but now pulverised RSC is still in the thrall of Dunnideer, which grazes the eastern horizon four-and-a-half miles away. Even more outrageously, the builders of Old Rayne placed their stones so exquisitely that the black massif of Tap O'Noth here appears to stand at Dunnideer's right shoulder, though it is, in truth, a further six miles due west.

Because nearly every RSC adhered to a preordained position and ground plan, travellers to these circles can understand their builders' original intentions even with virtually no megalithic remains. It is, therefore, a huge bonus that so much has survived in its original place. At Hatton of Ardoyne, built on yet another Candle Hill, south-west of Old Rayne, huge efforts must have been made in order to place the circle's great Recumbent stone so perfectly horizontal and therefore level with Bennachie's near horizon. Yet the eyes of the overwhelmed traveller are still constantly diverted by the enthralling sight of Dunnideer and its great sister hills rearing up at the far west.

By this time, travellers will have begun to believe Dunnideer capable of anything; indeed, it inevitably becomes disappointing to stand in a stone circle without a view of this sacred and magical hill. Even standing at Newcraig stone circle, north of Inverurie, 400 yards away in the next field from Loanhead of Daviot, Dunnideer still appears loud and magnificent at a distance of eight-and-three-quarter miles. So it is disappointing to learn that, until the recent tree planting, even Loanhead would have enjoyed a view to Aberdeenshire's greatest and most sacred hill.

ABOVE: Dunnideer and Tap O'Noth from Hatton of Ardoyne.

RIGHT: Even the Pictish Picardy Stone has a view to Dunnideer. The sacred massif of Bennachie occupies the skyline to the left

Out there a minute at Knock Hill

In an area as resplendent with stone circles as Grampian, only a locally-based on-site fieldwalker and researcher could ever get a real grip on these macrocosmic landscapes. To glimpse this place is a nourishing exercise, for its revelations of Neolithic Humanity are all so hearteningly positive. But to take in all of its delights and explain them to the outside world would surely be the vocation of the most ardent future mystic. This became clear on a brief visit north to the magnificently carved and cup-marked RSC known as Rothiemay,[G] with southern views overlooking the river Deveron. For, as we travelled out of the Dunnideer area to the Deveron Valley north of Huntly, far in the distance rose a huge and magnificent conical hill as large as any I had yet seen. This was Knock Hill and clearly of some ancient distinction, since 'Knock' was a rude 18th-century English rendering of the Gaelic *cnoc*, which means 'hill'.

Considering all the other hills in the area, Knock Hill's former name, simply Cnoc, suggests that it was originally too sacred even to require a name – it was literally 'the Hill' and no others counted. And Knock Hill was a minor Dunnideer, for she appeared on the horizon at stone circles such as Raich, Arnhill[13] and the Carlin Stone.[14] At this last stone circle, just downriver from Rothiemay, the presence of Knock Hill was supported by the stretched and slight recumbent hill-figure of Fourman Hill. Though the hill loses its reclining figure when viewed from the east, Fourman accommodates the brutish but brutalised Westerton stone circle on the most eastern slopes, whilst the stones of Yonder Bognie occupy the flat farmlands to the north-east. The recumbent Fourman is even visible from the Carlin stone almost seven miles away.

My meeting with Knock Hill immediately convinced me that casually investigating obscure Aberdeenshire would be the biggest can-of-worms that I could open, for there were bound to be sacred hills everywhere. Instead, I decided that I must trust that 'unknown future mystic' and return to the Dunnideer area, where there was work to be done at the great Mother figure known as Tap O'Noth.

Tap O'Noth the changeling as Mother and shadow

Like Sleeping Beauty south of Callanish, Tap O'Noth's role as the recumbent Great Mother worked both from a great distance, where she was employed to dominate the horizon, and also from very close up, like the Fangs stone circle on the Isle of Lewis, which had been symbolically built at the 'feet' of Sleeping Beauty even though those 'feet' only became as such from the Callanish complex. This shifting of perspectives intrigued me and I decided to visit each stone circle built within the lea of Tap O'Noth to judge the effects.

At Candy stone circle,[15] built at the 'feet' of Tap O'Noth, only one stone remained. This was a beautiful and large upright situated in the garden of the new 'Jeldah' cottage, recently built by the farmer for his daughter. But the garden was on the southern shelf of a fairly steep field overlooking a beautiful stream with the horribly Anglicised name Water of Bogie. And from here, Tap O'Noth was a changeling rearing up to the south-west of the former circle as a great black conical hill. Moving south of Kennethmont, Tap O'Noth returned to her full recumbent splendour at Ardlair's hilltop stones, and it was clear that the former Holywell circle would also have shared an equally divine position had it survived the 19th century. One mile west of Holywell, Bankhead of Clatt had also been a very large RSC, but it was now completely destroyed. On entering the farm, I immediately noticed several large stones and an obvious Recumbent deposited by an ornamental pond. The farmer's wife said it had been there since she was a child, and was formerly in a stone dike away to the west-north-west of the farm. The farmer fetched an old O.S. map, which showed the position of the stone circle and a former Bronze Age cemetery. I photographed the Recumbent – a huge stone of an obviously important circle, though both the farmer and his wife stated that the other stones were merely products of field clearance. But the former circle had stood unequivocally in the direct view of the sleeping figure called Tap O'Noth.

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[13] Arnhill stone circle is at O.S. 29.532456

[14] The Carlin Stone is at O.S. 29.675465. Fred Coles believed that 'this boulder, rugged, unshapely, and most unusual in height though it be, should be accepted as the Recumbent Stone of the Circle which once existed here.' Carlin was a corruption of the *cailleach* or 'hag'. It must be noted that the circles at Backhill of Drachlaw had no view to Knock Hill and on 27th July 1994 CE I wrote these notes on site: 'Strangely, the view to Knock Hill was incredible all the way until the [Backhill of Drachlaw] circle, at which time it was obliterated by the near [Drachlaw] hill… Yet standing at the Carlin Stone and its small clearance cairn, the Knock Hill view is spectacular whilst the Mother figure Fourman Hill is revealed elegant[ly] between two near horizon hills.' Author's journal, Rhodochrosite Fieldnotes, 1994 CE.

[15] Candy stone circle is at O.S. 37.534304. Candy stands in the lea of Knockandy Hill. Its name is a vile mutation of Cnoc an Ddu (pronounced 'Dee'), or 'Hill of the Deity', and is an example of 18th-century English imperialism, for such demeaning changes were foisted upon 'the Scotch' in order to undermine their culture and belittle their traditions.

Seeing the black mystery of Tap O'Noth looming up from this proximity was a powerful experience. I loudly lamented the pointless destruction of so many of these harmoniously placed monuments, each one so close to their neighbour and so clearly in awe of their Great Mother, here made most manifest. But the torture did not stop, and at Hillhead of Clatt, under a mile away, even the knowledge of the stone circle's former position was now lost. The owner of Hillhead, a Derbyshire man who repaired Land Rovers for a living, told us that over his nineteen years of occupancy several people from Edinburgh University had called, but no-one had yet discovered the circle. He had also been told that some Hillhead stones had been taken to Leith Hall, near Kennethmont. We travelled to Leith Hall, but it was soon obvious that a long investigation would be required there and our time was running out. Instead, we chose to locate other circles, bemoaning that strange antiquarian need to tear up stones from the homes they had had through millennia, probably in order to satisfy the ego of some wealthy middle-aged man and his garden's maximum seventy-year lifespan.

But then, having travelled from Tap O'Noth's feet all the way down to her head with no more than the frustration of recently destroyed monuments to show for it, we at last struck gold at the Corrstones circle,[16] on the farm called Mains of Druminnor. The Corrstones, or 'Stones of Koeur', stood high in Corrstone Wood overlooking the stream of Kearn Burn 600 yards to the east and the remains of Kearn church even closer to the south-east. And at this hidden Koeur centre, the great head of the recumbent Tap O'Noth reared up through the trees like some huge conical breast. The circle had been one of the largest RSCs of all, though its stones now lay half-buried amidst brushwood and pine cones. The Recumbent stone had the same semi-inflated penis qualities of that at Cothiemuir Wood,[G] and my head reeled at the power which would once have been generated from this hilltop shrine.

We drifted dreamily down from the Corrstones and turned west for Wheedlemont Hill, also known as Cnoc Cailliche, or 'Hill of the Hag'. Though the towering Tap O'Noth overshadows this prehistorically sculpted Mother hill, she calls out to the surrounding landscape. Archaeologists 'suggest that defence was not an overwhelming priority for the builders',[17] and aerial photographs of the hill reveal nothing more than an enclosure with a one-metre-deep ditch around the summit. If this was a ritual hill, then the single north-easterly entranceway would, significantly, have led to the ruined stone circle at Cnoc Cailliche's foot. The invisible remains of this circle stood in an unapproachable crop, so we continued for about 400 yards to the blissfully quiet slopes of Templand. Here, two wonderfully large uprights stood in dry, yellow, sheep-shortened pasture, overlooked by the ominous black beauty of Tap O'Noth. Once more she had become the same conical breast we had first seen so early in the morning at the far north, whilst the awesomely distant Mither Tap reared up over thirteen miles away to the east.

The image of living in the lea of the Great Mother's 'tap', or tit, is a beautiful metaphor for the reliance on the Great Mother constantly shown by Neolithic Humanity. But in Aberdeenshire, the cult appears to have become quite out of control. So many stone circles were erected that it is possible to guess which terraces may have had circles

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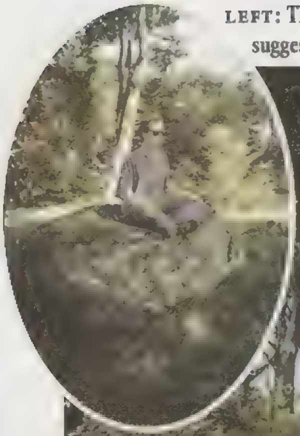
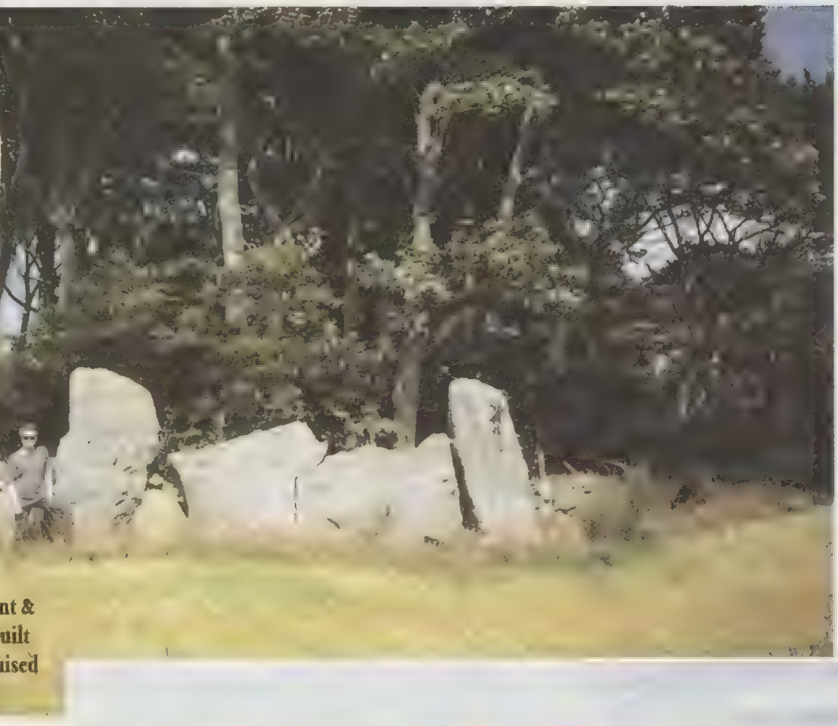
[16] The Corrstones are at O.S. 37.510271

[17] HMSO, *Exploring Scotland's Heritage*

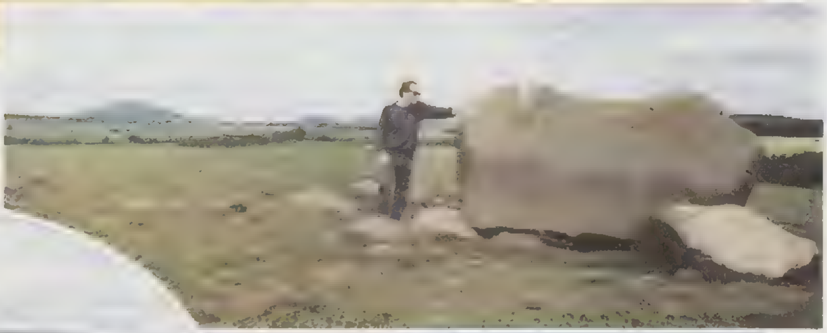
LEFT: The Newcraig Flyer stands close to the Newcraig stone circle. Its shape and position suggest ancient importance and a possible earlier provenance than the circle itself.

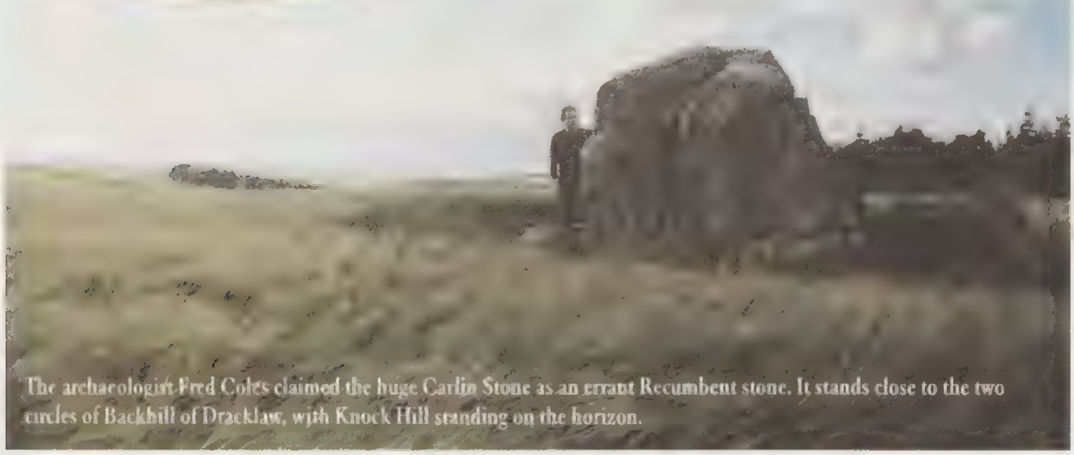




The remarkable Recumbent & flankers at Newcraig are built into a field wall, and disguised within a copse of trees.

The stone circle of Arnhill stands in the sight of Knock Hill to the north, and the recumbent figure of Fourmans Hill, to the near east.



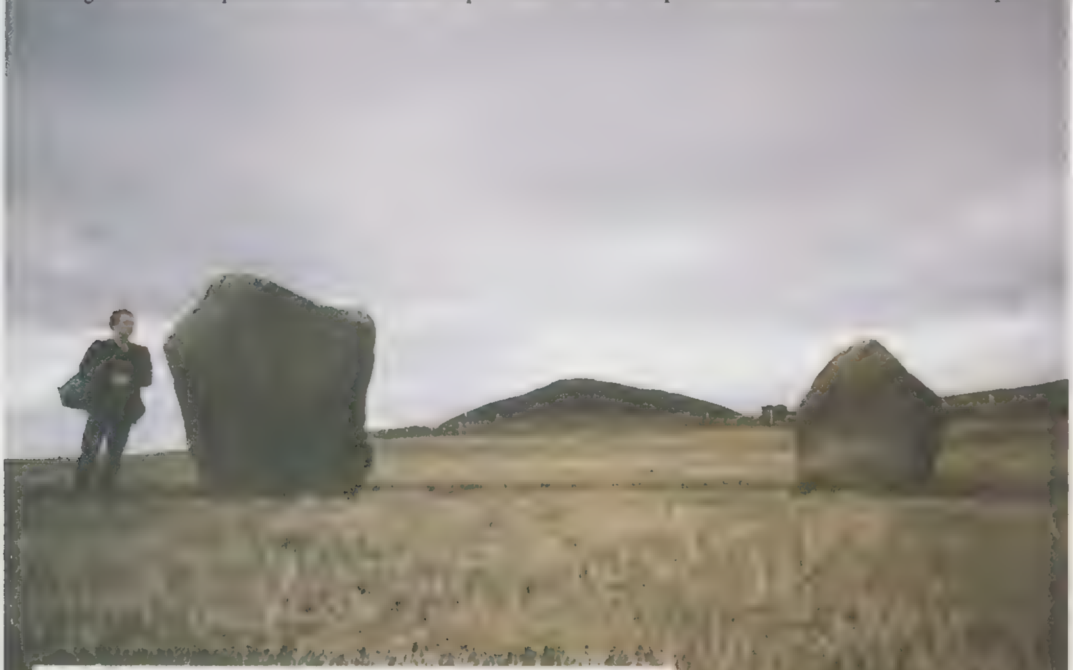


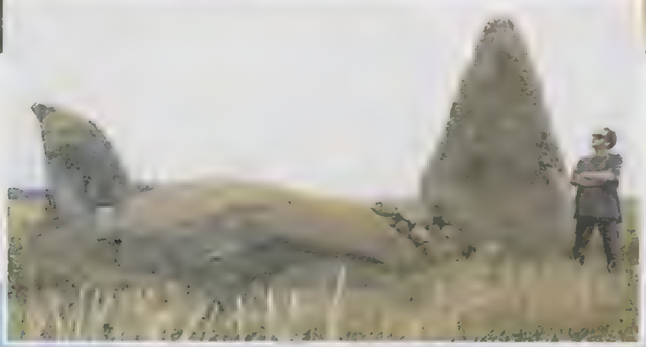
The archaeologist Fred Coles claimed the huge Carlin Stone as an errant Recumbent stone. It stands close to the two circles of Backhill of Drachlaw, with Knock Hill standing on the horizon.

Yonder Bognie has been owned by the same farming family for over 500 years.
They still use the circle as a storage area, but its large stones are in excellent condition.

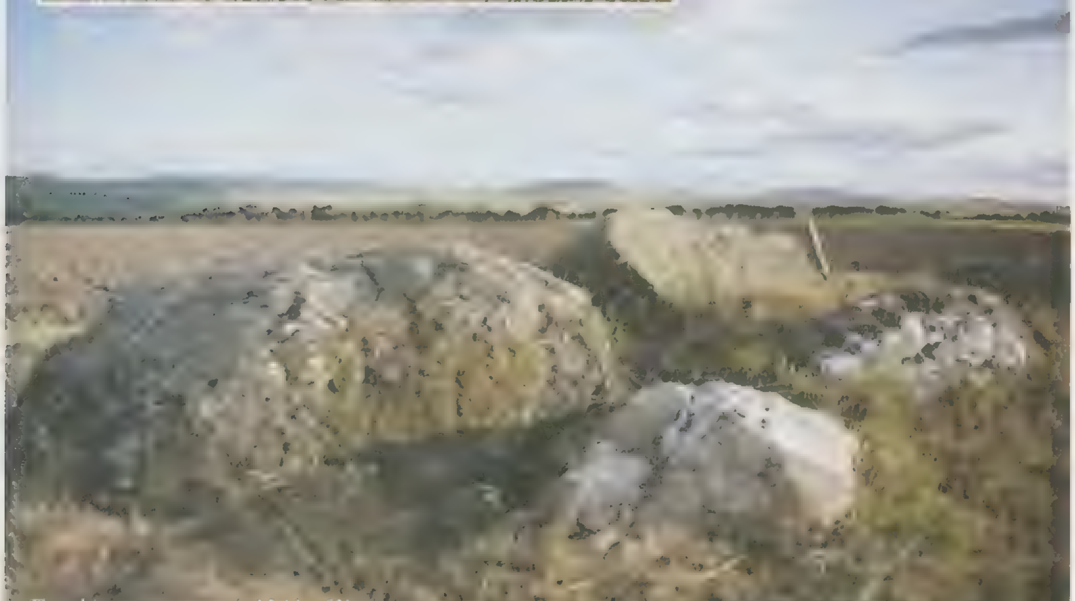
RIGHT: The Corrstones stand near the 'shoulders' of Tap O'Noth. Though mainly fallen, the ring would have been one of the largest RSCs of all, during the Neolithic.
BELOW: The single surviving upright of the Candy stone circle. The 'feet' of Tap O'Noth rise up at the left of the photograph.
INSET BOTTOM: At Bankhead of Clatt, the farmer's wife points to the place on the old O.S. map where the Recumbent stone once stood.

The huge stones at Templand stand at the head of Tap O'Noth. Note how Tap O'Noth here takes on a Dunnideer aspect.

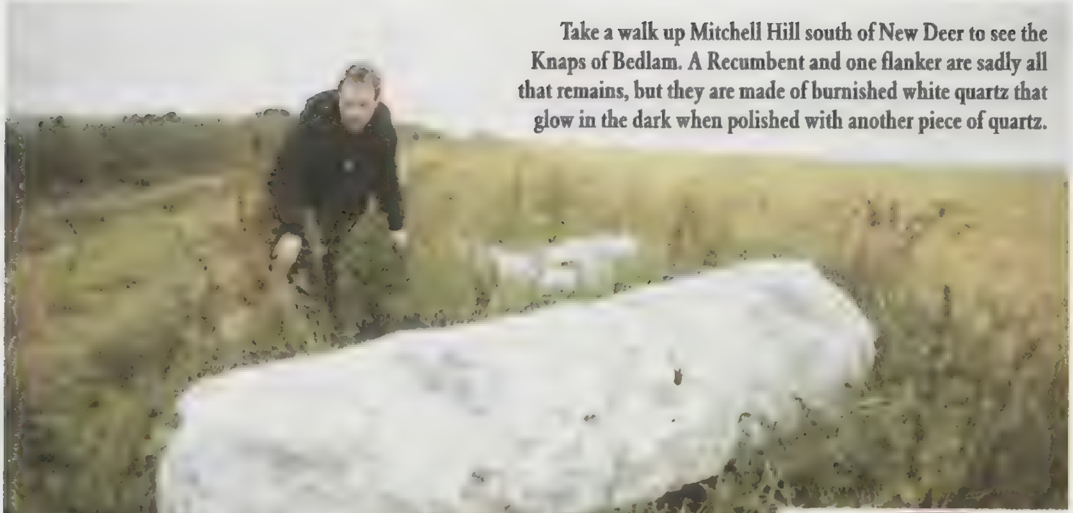




Despite a hugely loud crow-scarer, this circle at Nether Corskie has fabulous flankers and a wonderful position on a south-westerly shelf overlooking the river of Kinhernie Burn. The sacred hill called the Barmekin of Echt rises mysteriously at the south-west.

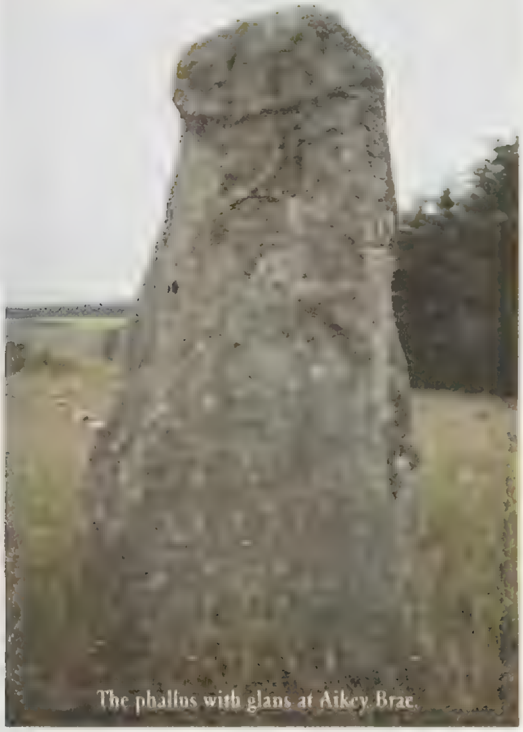


The white quartz stones at Mains of Hatton.

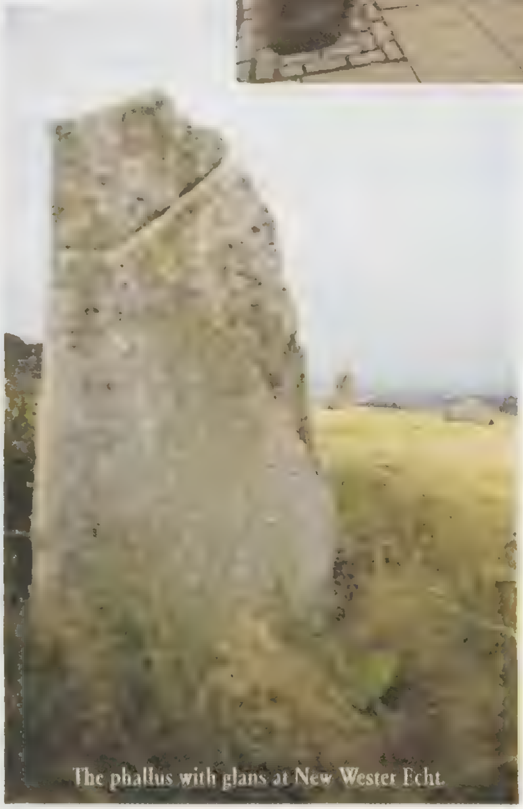


Take a walk up Mitchell Hill south of New Deer to see the Knaps of Bedlam. A Recumbent and one flanker are sadly all that remains, but they are made of burnished white quartz that glow in the dark when polished with another piece of quartz.

LEFT: The stones of Druidsfield stand on a high shelf overlooking a smart farm. RIGHT: I followed the map as we drove into Huntly, convinced that the stones would be gone. But having parked, the stones were actually beside our parked car, next to a statue.



The phallus with glans at Aikey Brae.



The phallus with glans at New Wester Echt.

while travelling casually through Aberdeenshire. In truth, travelling casually proves quite impossible with huge Recumbent stones lying in fields everywhere, often with one great flanker still upright as a final defiant gesture. The high achievement of these Grampian societies is even more awesome because of their ability to sustain their lunar muse over many centuries.

On Hawk Hill – a Grampian epilogue

C*losing note through Findhorn A96 west, 4th August 1994 CE:* At the very last circle we visited on the trek of 1994 CE, it came as rather a disturbing surprise to discover that this was one of, if not the, greatest RSCs of them all. High on Hawk Hill, overlooking the greatest of all views, stood one single standing stone and the most outrageous free-standing Recumbent stone of all.[18] It stood proudly rising to the crook of the branches of the large copse that had obviously been planted to help everyone forget it was there. Ha! Wrong! The Hawk Hill Recumbent seemed all the more huge because we had just revisited Old Keig for the umpteenth time. This Recumbent clearly dwarfed Old Keig in size, and its position on the hill put it beyond even the glory of Wantonwells (overlooked by Dunnideer and Hill of Christ's Kirk). I had to be restrained as the hill was full of rampant bullocks, bollock-less but unafraid – in fact, extremely feisty in their herd of twenty or so. It proved impossible to persuade those bloody mancows to give us safe passage the last twenty yards to the crest of Hawk Hill. Ha! And on the way back, those erring bovines would not even let us cross back to the car.

Despondent that we had not even remotely got the measure of Aberdeenshire after three summers, and feeling that the events on Hawk Hill were the Goddess's way of somehow reminding us of this, we were reeling. As we made our way back to Dunnideer and on to Old Rayne, we felt a little beaten ... Hawk Hill stone circle was the place, but it had been built on the hill of Tantalus ... we passed Wantonwells, descended into Insch and ... OUT CAME THE SUN, DIRECTLY SUSPENDED OVER DUNNIDEER! As though a choir of voices were saying, 'Yes, indeed you shall return, and soon,' the sun hung low under the curtain of clouds that had all afternoon turned the day into premature dusk, and then, on Jacob's Ladder, the sun did descend, rung by rung, until Dunnideer was ringed by the greatest cosmic send-off I have ever seen. And now I am happy, for we shall return...

To the Chapel O'Sink, to the Druidstones, to Loudon Wood (where we did not go) and to all the stones we visited and circles where we wished to remain for hours on end, to Aberdeenshire, and to Grampian, I say: 'I salute you – I love you, Amen.'

On Hawk Hill – the bullocks who brooked no bollocks.

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[18] The Hawk Hill Recumbent stone is at O.S. 37.605243

chapter
nine

Proto-Neolithic Temples

'Thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: For if thou lift thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.'

EXODUS 20:25

'[The natural stones of Henblas Dolmen] are a very remarkable phenomenon which must have attracted the attention and admiration of a people used to setting up Meini Hirion and other large stone monuments.'

FRANCES LYNCH, *PREHISTORIC ANGLESEY*

'The ancients, said Socrates, were uncomplicated, and if a certain rock was known for telling the truth, they would listen to it.'

JOHN MICHELL, *SIMULACRA*

Natural altars, oracle stones & gorsedds

As this Gnostic odyssey unfolds, it becomes clear that natural topographical features permeated megalithic sites from the Hebridean rocky outcrops of Callanish and her related monuments to the sacred green hill altars of Howden and Blakey Topping in North Yorkshire via countless other mysterious conical hills. On the Marlborough Downs before agriculture, we have seen that it was to the Mother's Jam on Fyfield Down that Stone Age Humanity first came. For thousands of years the oracle stones called to them and focused them to run their lives. Brought down in the slurried flows of the late Ice Age, these enormous new granite-hard sarsen stones lay like tumbled diamonds all along the cleft of the Mother, from just below New Totterdown in the north, through Delling and Piggledene to Lockeridge Dene at the south. The Mother's Jam is the most fertile square mile on the Marlborough Downs and I once picked twenty-seven different types of mushroom there in under an hour.[1] In fact, the Mother's Jam was so-named

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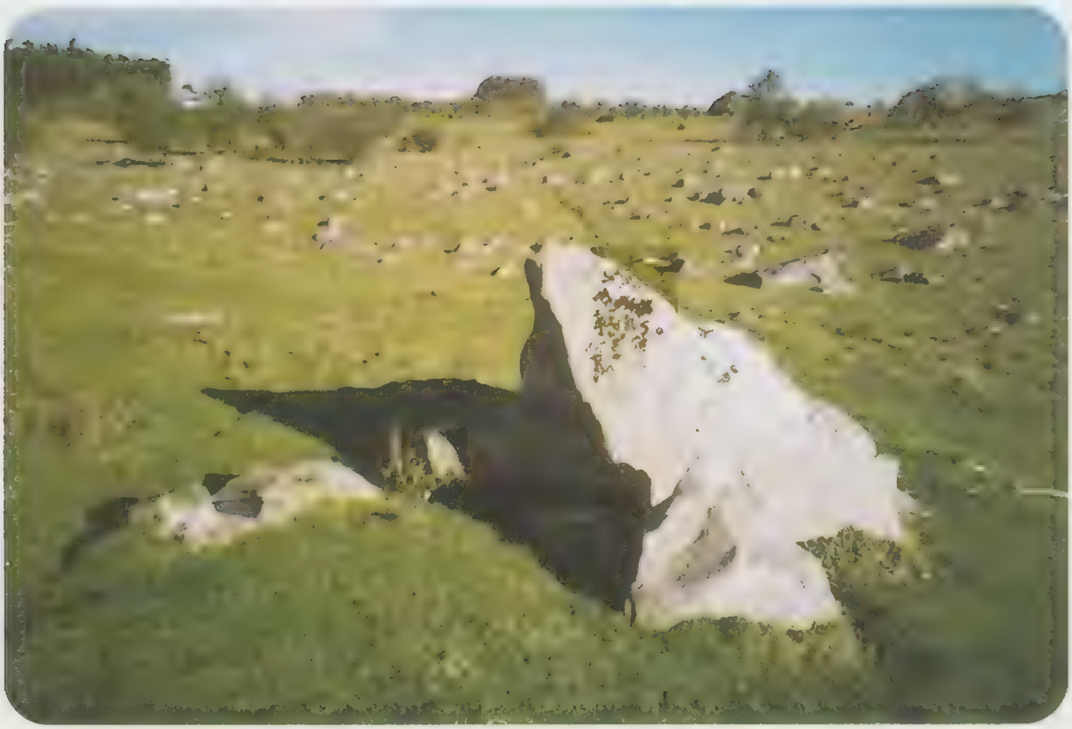
[1] In the early autumn of 1994 CE, I was so shocked at the selection of mushrooms on Fyfield Down that I experimented to see how many I could pick in an hour. I walked around with two plastic carrier bags and filled them both. Bell-shaped, conical, funnel-shaped, umbonate, lateral, convex – all were there. Delicate chanterelles, such as the large *Canthrellus cibarius*, and huge fly agarics were neighbours in the damp woods of Delling Copse, whilst across the Mother's Jam, east towards the 14th-century earthwork warren and north across to the Polisher, psylocybe was available, along with many magic-mushroom lookalikes. Indeed, it was the sheer choice of colours and different sizes of mushrooms which most surprised me. Of the twenty-seven different mushroom types, my favourites were a large faerie-ring of *Strobilomyces floccopus*, or the Old Man of the Woods, which provided two large breakfasts and one excellent soup.



TOP: The scattered stones of the Mother's Jam create a natural temple at the great Delling stone. Note the natural rock basin filled with rainwater, below left.
ABOVE: The natural monoliths known as the Pinnacles rise up close to the legendary Old Man of Storr, on the north-east coast of the Isle of Skye.

for the mystical powdery ooze that menstruates through the site at sundown, a time when the shamanic spirit of both animals and humans is activated.

In this sacred valley great ideas had been born for thousands of years before the incoming Neolithics chose the sacred stones for their own intentionally made monuments. A similar situation existed at the Valley of Stones[G] in Dorset, where great stones akin to those of Fyfield Down littered the valley floor. Again, with the coming of Neolithic people, the role of the Valley of Stones changed from natural temple to sacred quarry, from whose divine effervescences all the future local monuments would be constructed. But standing on the steep eastern sides of the Valley of Stones gives a wondrous distant view down to the long reclining figure of Golden Cap – a powerful combination of natural features which functioned as temples even without the erection of great stones or the heaping of huge banks of earth. As the natural temple in sight of the Great Goddess at Golden Cap, the Valley of Stones is the finest contender of all – and infinitely older than any human construction.

In the late 20th century, when it is so easy to dip into the well of previous human experience, it is vitally important to remember that the first Neolithic temples could clearly have had no human antecedents, for to our knowledge no previous humans had made temples before this time. Seeking inspiration from outside human experience, the Ancients searched for it in the very Nature of which they were still part and their earliest creations were analogues of natural formations. Indeed, it is likely that the earliest monument builders dared go only just so far for fear of offending the Great Mother. And though the sacred Mother hills and reclining hill formations are the most spectacular of all the topography which spurred the Ancients on, there are natural landmarks all over Britain and the rest of the world from which archetypes of monuments have grown up.

Natural monoliths such as the huge needle-like Pinnacles, near the legendary Old Man of Storr on the Isle of Skye, filled the Neolithics with a deep sense of awe, followed by an underlying determination to imitate them. Similarly, the great Orcadian rock-stack known as the Old Man of Hoy would have inspired those intrepid pioneers crossing the barely-navigable Minch on their way to the Orkneys.

All the quartzite glacial erratics discovered by the Ancients were first worshipped for their own power then later incorporated into Neolithic monuments, as can be seen at the Muir of Ord in the Highlands of Scotland, where an enormous rose quartz boulder was buried within the ground plan of a small henge. And, as we see from Frances Lynch's banner quote at the beginning of this chapter, the three Avebury-sized quartz boulders of Henblas Dolmen[G] on Anglesey inspired both ritual around these stones and Neolithic burial beneath them.

In Cornwall, the natural rocking stones known as Logan stones (pronounced 'Loggan') inspired that area's dolmen obsession, with high-flying capstones perched upon fine granite uprights. In South Wales at Pont-y-Pridd,[2] or 'Bridgit's Bridge', at the confluence of the two sacred rivers Taf and Rhondda, stands the famous rocking stone known as Carreg Siglo. This great stone has maintained its legend right up to modern times, when bardic congresses and even election hustings have been held at the site.

Overlooking the Morecambrian Sands north of Blackpool, the Three Brothers are a trio of fabulous natural altars high on Warton Crag, standing in thick woodland upon natural rocky plinths. Surveyed by Alexander Thom[3] but now almost lost in the creeping vegetation, this trio of rocking stones would have been superbly inspiring on their formerly treeless summit.

Elsewhere, natural throne stones, or gorsedds (pronounced 'gor-seth', with a hard 'th' as in 'that'),

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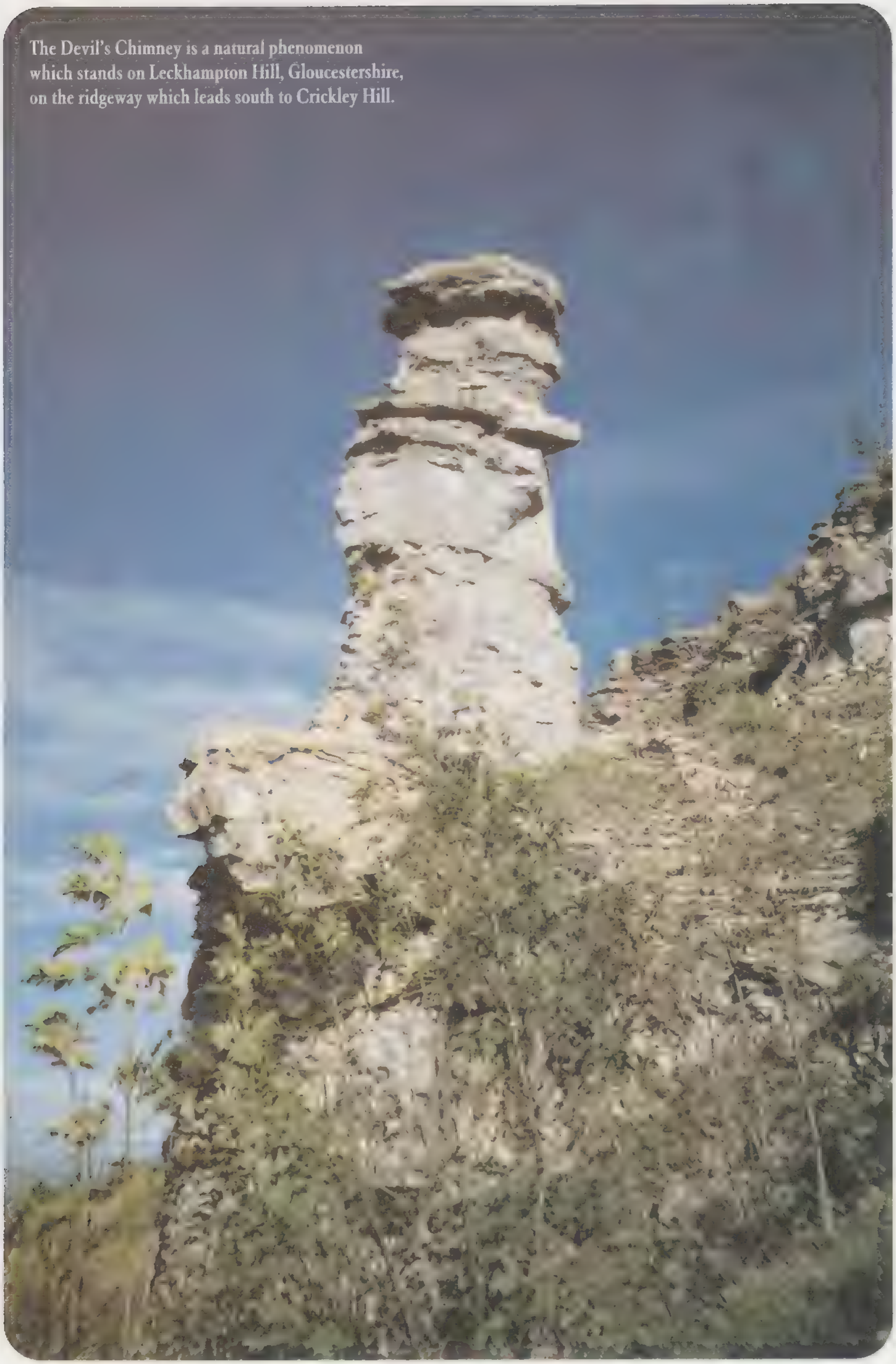
[2] Pont-y-Pridd stones are at 4. a) 10. In the 1910 General Election, the unsuccessful Labour candidate, G. B. Stanton, held his meetings at Carreg Siglo. The Archdruid Morien O Morgan also wrote extensively about Carreg Siglo in his 1900 work *The Royal Winged Son of Stonehenge and Avebury*.

[3] This was clearly a difficult site for Thom to evaluate; indeed, he recorded the words 'poor survey' across his pencil drawings. In March 1997 CE, whilst I was studying the Three Brothers survey at the National Monuments Record of Scotland, in Edinburgh, my friend Chris Farrell noted the dirty and soiled condition of the 'poor survey' of this site and suggested that Mrs Thom had been wrapping her husband's chips in the papers.



The Devil's Chimney is a natural phenomenon which stands on Leckhampton Hill, Gloucestershire, on the ridgeway which leads south to Crickley Hill.

LEFT: When the Muir of Ord henge was redesigned to take the eleventh hole of a golf-course, a JCB was employed to dig out the enormous piece of rose quartz, now dumped in the foreground.

BELOW: The natural stones of Henblas Dolmen are Avebury-size monsters of white quartz.

BOTTOM: This huge gorsedd at Bryn-Celli-Ddu stands between the chambered cairn and the Llanddaniel Fab menhir.

were utilised as early monuments, then incorporated into later Neolithic plans. At Bryn-Celli-Ddu[G] in Anglesey, the circle-henge/mound forms part of a brief alignment with the Llanddaniel Fab menhir and the rocky gorsedd, a dramatic natural outcrop rising 200 yards to the west-north-west. The gorsedd is easily climbed, with an obvious time-worn path, as though it had been used for generations, and there is a splendid place of purchase at the top on which to squat for hours. A smaller standing stone remains upright in the same field as the gorsedd, to the south-west.

In Dorset, just to the west of the Nine Stones of Winterbourne Abbas,[G] there once stood another natural gorsedd known as the Broad Stone, or 'Brüd' stone. This sacred Bridgit stone was like a vast and natural megalithic sideboard, formerly standing beside the A35, seven feet high. William Stukeley's illustration of the Nine Stones, from the posthumously published *Itinerarium Curiosum* of 1776, shows the Broad Stone in the very near distance. Roger Coombes, the farmer at Westhill farm, told me that the old men still climbed upon its smooth flat top to play cards when he was a boy, but it was the cause of many accidents and was almost entirely buried for safety, four black bollards beside the A35 being its only markers today.

Probably the most impressive natural throne of all is the wondrously positioned Andle Stone[G] in the Peak District, a handsome flat-topped giant anciently cup-marked and lovingly set within its landscape by a huge ring of drystone wall planted with glowing lilacs and glorious gorse. Doll Tor stone circle is built in its lea just 400 yards downhill, and the Andle Stone overlooks the magical Lathkill Valley and naturally marks the entranceway on to Stanton Moor.[4] Up here in the perpetual twilight of Stanton Moor's true mystery, the remains of seventy cairns and one complete stone circle, the famous Nine Maidens, protrude from the landscape with as much caution as any human-made monument can. Stone gorsedds such as the Andle Stone are Meso-Neolithic entanglements, natural intermediary monuments which have undergone simple alterations, perhaps at the most a kerb of boulders around a natural rock.[5] And, like the sacred Mother hills which were later commandeered as Iron Age hillforts, the only questions on the lips of the Ancients were: Can we use it? Can we integrate it?

At Shap, in Cumbria, a huge glacial erratic called the Thunder Stone was incorporated into an Avebury-like temple of stone avenues and circles, whilst the three white quartz giants at Henblas were formerly linked to the river Cefni below by a long avenue of stones. At Newcraig in Aberdeenshire, the original inspiration for the positioning of that particular RSC seems to have been 'the Newcraig Flyer[6] just twenty yards to the east of the stone circle. This large megalithic basin was the ultimate gorsedd, inviting the traveller to climb aboard in a lotus position and prepare for spiritual take-off. The incoming Neolithics echoed this natural throne in their huge Recumbent stone, which was symbolically carved with its own great inward-facing seat.

Sometimes the beauty of these sacred landscapes overwhelmed their own monuments. On the Burren in Galway, at the far west of Ireland, the sheer faerie-dust magic of the massive sacred uprising of powdery blue-grey rock kicks the famous Poulnabrone dolmen into insignificance. Far to the south, Delphi was the sacred omphalos of ancient Greece and the home of the god Apollo. And it is here possible to extend the megalithic time boundaries even further. For Delphi, with its Classical stadium, its pillars and amphitheatre, still retains its Goddess beginnings with a magnificent natural spring and the Rock of the Sibyl, all positioned high in the mountains as though held in the Great Mother's palm. The Rock of the Sibyl is the natural gorsedd, still in place from its distant origins, but ignored by unregarding tourists on a strictly Classical trip. When I alerted a guide to Neolithic rock-cut tombs in a huge stone outcrop close to Delphi's stadium, he waved his hand and shook his head dismissively, 'Eee! Prehistoric!'

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[4] Stanton Moor is at 3. b) 5 with the Nine Ladies

[5] K. Arne Blom & Jan Moen, ***Skanska Stenar***, Illustris Forlag. On page 101 of this Swedish archaeology book are two photographs, both of natural stones used as altar stones. The top stone has stone causeways built around it, whilst the bottom one is in its place alone.

[6] The Newcraig Flyer is at Loanhead of Daviot at 7. a) 10. None of the other fifty-nine Aberdeenshire stone circles visited had this feature.

LEFT: The legendary Broad Stone of Winterbourne Abbas once stood to a height of almost six feet. It has been almost submerged by the side of the A30, in an effort to reduce the number of vehicles crashing into it.

BELOW LEFT: This natural glacial erratic boulder is known as the Thunder Stone. It was formerly part of the Shap complex of sites in Cumbria, and was said to have once been linked to the rest of the temple by a long double avenue of standing stones.

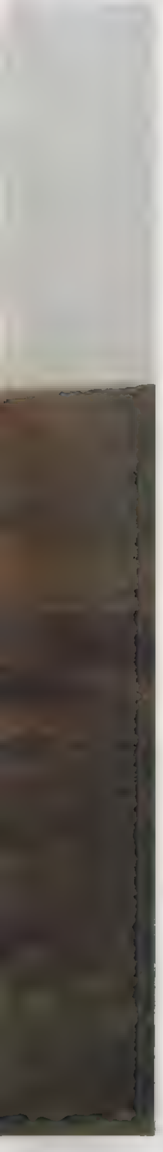
BELOW: The Newcraig seat is a peculiar phenomenon on the inside of the Recumbent stone, comfortable and impelling to the visitor.

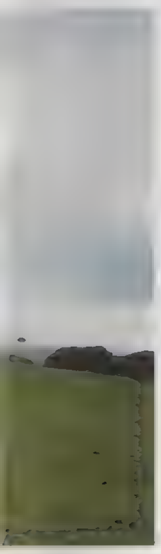
The Rock of the Sybil, at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, in Greece, belongs to the time before temple-building Humanity. Here at this natural stone, many oracular judgements were made. This natural temple was later incorporated into the Neolithic period, with rock-cut tombs. The final Classical stage of the temple here surrounds the Rock of the Sybil. Travellers to Delphi and other parts of Ancient Greece are often unaware that this ur-temple still exists beneath the later overlay.

Capel Garmon.

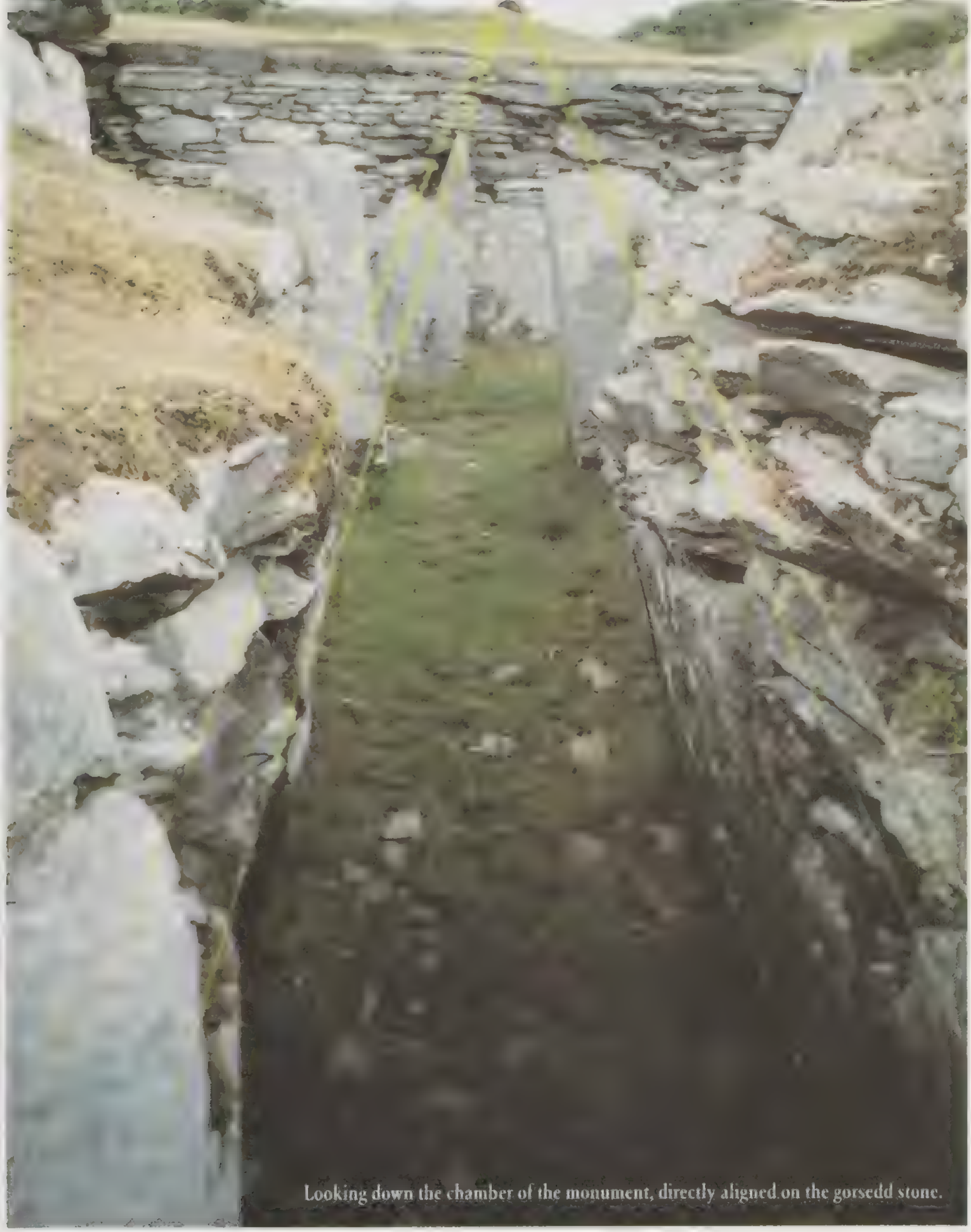
'The Loneliest Grave in the World', Isle of Hoy, The Orkneys. In the 19th century, a sixteen-year-old girl called Betty Corrigall fell in love with a sailor. But when he left her, her heart was broken, so she committed suicide. Hoy's minister insisted that she be buried on the boundary of the parish, miles from the village. Only 'God's acre', the sanctified area around the church, is considered sacred to the Christian – elsewhere is profane and exploitable. But, to the Ancients, everywhere was of the Great Goddess, and everywhere was sacred.

At Capel Garmon, a natural gor [illegible]





The Capel Garmon pyramid



Looking down the chamber of the monument, directly aligned on the gorsedd stone.

Christian attitudes in the study of Pagan sites

We have become so preoccupied with scientifically-named time scales that we psychologically separate the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze, Iron and Roman ages into neat study-able chunks when there is, in truth, always a great deal of hangover from one age to the next. Indeed, in South Wales, at the time of the Roman conquest, there were still nomadic hill tribes, the Silures of the Brecon Beacons, who had refused to take up agriculture and a sedentary lifestyle, despite the fact that their neighbours were clearly visible in the flatlands beyond engaged in farming practices throughout the previous 3,500 years. And when the Beaker folk arrived with their exquisite pottery and metal-workings, they did not merely yell, 'All change, it's the Bronze Age!' But our centuries of Christian worship have blinded scientists to the knowledge that, by studying megalithic monuments right up close, they are all practising their craft in a Christian manner. Christian doctrine has always spoken of dark forces in the earth which must be overwhelmed and subdued. This is why the consecrated ground around a church is known as 'God's acre'. Murderers, suicides and non-believers were always buried in unconsecrated ground outside 'God's acre', precisely because it was outside God's restriction, where he had no control. But the Pagan religions had never seen any such limit – all of the land was consecrated because the Great Mother was all of the land.

But such inward-looking scientific attitudes persisted into the 20th century in such a way that allowed archaeologists to measure the diameter of a stone circle in nice modern feet, yet ignore the physical evidence of the natural horizon, however full of topographical clues it may have been. They wrote guidebooks about stone circles of the area, but refused to include a dolmen in the next field because it fell outside their own self-imposed boundaries.[7] In studying first the big hand, then the little hand, then all the numbers individually, scientists were never close to seeing the whole clock and therefore telling the time. Science had become compart-mental!

The great gorsedd at Capel Garmon

Nowhere was this made more clear than at the chambers of Capel Garmon, a famous North Walean monument that appears in every basic guidebook, a standard tourist trap and with good reason. Arriving at the farm entrance, travellers mount the five-bar gate and make their way along the level roadway until their descent into a faerie valley with unbelievable horizon perspectives of mountain ranges with peaks and troughs like a heartbeat indicator. Here is a stunning, ever-changing skyline in which vast weather systems cause whole ridges of distant mountains to rise up, only to disappear again then return in collusion with other nearer mountain ranges, thus creating the illusion of an entirely different horizon. I watched this topographical cosmic assault on the senses and drew nearer to see a sight that confounded me. There, on the far right, was a large natural hillock amidst flat pasture with a large rocky boulder on its summit; to the far left was the cairn, the main purpose of this visit. Temporarily ignoring the cairn, I checked out the rock and discovered that the top was mountable and comfortable and strangely easy to sit upon. In front was a great flat area of green pasture ideal for assemblies and the arrangement reminded me of the Mother's Jam. I wandered down to the cairn, whose long chambers I had noted to be orientated north–south. But the other chamber, which led off at the side to create a y-shaped ground plan, was strangely orientated, so I jumped down into the roofless passageway and walked to its end. Turning around and looking down this shorter passage, I was surprised to see that it was directly aligned upon the gorsedd stone on the natural mound 200 yards away.

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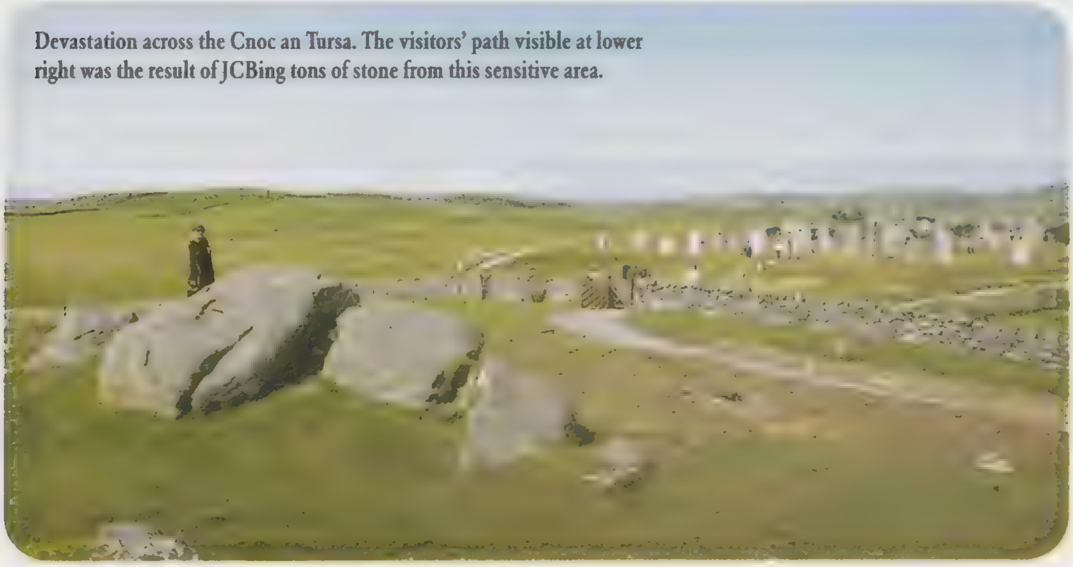
[7] The list of local studies which categorise unnecessarily and make it more difficult for the reader/traveller is endless. Peter Knight's brilliant *Ancient Stones of Dorset* ignores the Neolithic Peter and Andrew stones of Toller Porcorum because they are in a churchyard! He also ignores the Cerne Giant, yet adds all Roman stones! Stranger still, Chris Barber's *Ancient Stones of Wales* excludes all mounds and hill altars, however integral they are to the megalithic site in question, yet stones that are actually destroyed are included in a manner that makes the reader set out hopefully. Yet Barber is a brilliant scholar and his other books, *Mysterious Wales* and *More Mysterious Wales*, have been totally thorough, informative and so easy to use.

Why was this information not available in all the texts that I had read? As we have already seen in Chapter 7, this phenomenon is repeated at Torrylin on the Isle of Arran, where the main chamber is orientated towards the holy rock of Ailsa Craig.[8] It is as though every writer of every guidebook had merely rehashed the sentiments of previous writers, for fear of describing what they truly saw – as though the smug scientific Establishment had discovered all the prehistoric monuments deemed necessary for their orthodox thought, and any attitudes which opened up too many new lines of enquiry were considered to be 'a can-of-worms too far'.

Mammy, they JCB'd the Cnoc an Tursa

I make this point most forcefully because of a grievous error made in 1994 CE by those in charge of the Callanish monuments. The subsequent destruction which the environs of the monument suffered took place merely through a wilfully Cyclopean attitude regarding which part of Callanish is 'the monument' and which part is 'land to be used/abused in any attempt to ease access to the monument'. In short, they took a JCB and dug a path out of the Cnoc an Tursa (pronounced 'Krawk an Tursa'), the natural rocky outcrop which had been the reason for Callanish's position in the first place. For confirmation of this fact, look down to the other two stone circles along Loch Roag[9] and notice that their low promontory outcrops were a 'special feature'. And so special had the Cnoc an Tursa once been that the remains of a cairn were discovered upon its summit, along with the huge depression of a deep post-hole snugly butting right up against the north end of the outcrop. In this great hole was placed the very pole which was used to align the great megalithic cross of Callanish, yet the excavator of the site (the self-styled 'discoverer' of Margaret Curtis' lost stone) had made no effort whatsoever to halt this outrageous action.

In all societies, even those with no megalithic culture, great stones have long been worshipped as manifestations of local deities. The Balancing Rocks


Devastation across the Cnoc an Tursa. The visitors' path visible at lower right was the result of JCBing tons of stone from this sensitive area.

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[8] Torrylin and Ailsa Craig are at 6. b) 8

[9] The Loch Roag circles are Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh at 7. b) 5 and Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag at 7. b) 6

in Oregon are tall, natural rocky towers topped with a large flat overhanging stone. Nearby is a cave full of petroglyphs. The Tripod Rock on a north New Jersey mountain ridge has attracted attention in recent years as 'New Jersey's Stonehenge', yet it is a huge glacial erratic upon three fortunately-placed boulders which gives the impression of a megalithic chamber similar to the Maen Cetty on the Gower Peninsula.[G] These natural stones always lay at the heart of their ancient cultures, and it is vital that we appreciate their relationship with the Neolithic sites which they inspired, or more will go the tragic way of the Cnoc an Tursa.

Callanish before catastophe. The rocky area to the right of Callanish stones is the original ur-temple known as Cnoc an Tursa. It is seen here in March 1991 CE, in its original pristine state.

When I walked out to the real Starr Carr

Most of all, these natural gorsedds and altar stones represent a time of incredible possibilities, a twinkle in the eyes of ancient Humanity, a glimpse of what-could-be. On 1st November 1996 CE, I stood at the most famous Mesolithic settlement in Britain – the rising ground of Starr Carr on the banks of the river Hartford in Yorkshire. The low-lying position of the settlement seemed to have been a metaphor for Humanity's new aims, for its determination had been to reach upwards and achieve great new things. To the north was the mysterious scar of land thrusting out of the ground, later to become Scarborough, whilst to the south rose the Yorkshire Wolds, a future centre of such vibrant Neolithic activity that it was later to influence even Avebury. Yet standing at Starr Carr for those mystical moments, the Time of Now fell away and I briefly glimpsed the world as the Ancients had once seen it. And as I started off back down the trackway towards Woodhouse farm, my new 'old' eyes scanned the horizon and everything natural and beautiful and integrated with the land was, suddenly, also separated and grand and mind-manifestingly Monumental!

CHAPTER

ten

Metal & the Rise of the Individual in the Decline & Fall of the Great Goddess Culture

'...man was now about to go from what seems to have been a fairly simple outdoor food-gathering and food-growing life to a new kind of existence in crowded communities that have always been at war with each other.'

PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN, *PREHISTORIC EUROPE*

'...with the abandonment of stone for the increasing use of metal, something changed in people's hearts.'

ANNE BANCROFT, *ORIGINS OF THE SACRED*

'When metal was introduced, it was no longer the collective effort to work it that was emphasised, but the individuality of the person who wore it.'

JEAN-PIERRE MOHEN, *LE MONDE DES MEGALITHES*

'The mistake begins with talk about *one* megalithic culture.'

FELIX R. PATURI, *PREHISTORIC HERITAGE*

Fatherhood

As the Neolithic period moved slowly on, the Great Goddess must have engendered a feeling of eternity in her people. She had been their centre for thousands of years and had seen their journeys, their endless migrations and finally their settlement. Long had they revered her, first by worshipping in her caverns and at her waterfalls and great trees, then later by the placing of stone circles around her natural hill altars and in the slumbering forms of their burial monuments. The Wheel of the Year swung seemingly endlessly around and around, illustrated in the heavens by the transits of the sun and the moon, and seen annually in the birth, life and death cycle of the Ancients' agriculture and in their keeping of domestic animals. It is ironic, therefore, that it was most likely to have been the observations of women engaged in animal husbandry that first linked the male with the birth process. The date when men first learned of their role in childbirth cannot be precisely located and the scholar Arthur Cotterell has written: '...there is no evidence from the New Stone Age that mankind understood biological conception.'[1] But the loaded chalk and flint fertility altar discovered at Grimes Graves, which we learned of in Chapter 3, was probably of late Neolithic date – perhaps around 2000 BCE, according to the archaeologist Nicholas Thomas.[2] Unfortunately, whilst the knowledge of men's role in childbirth finally redressed the balance between the two sexes, this peace was only very temporary and a far greater and more deadly menace loomed on the near horizon – a menace which would fatally tip the balance away from women for all time.

The Coming of Copper & Bronze

To this Stone Age British Isles, as early as 3000 BCE, select groups of copper and bronze users began to arrive from Europe, where the Ages of Stone had begun to decline far earlier. In their small numbers, these metal-working incomers interacted with the indigenous British population and, at first, the two worked harmoniously together. It has even been suggested that copper ore brought in by the metal-users may have been perceived as a form of magical stone by the Neolithics,[3] for it is malleable and workable without being heated in flame. So popular was copper in prehistoric Europe that there is nowadays a separate Europe-only intermediary prehistoric classification known as the Chalcolithic or Copper Age. But Stone Age Britain's lingering avoidance of metals meant that here copper would never be more than an oddity, for it was soon to be overtaken by bronze, a substance far easier to use. And over the next 500 years, as the ever-increasing flow of Bronze Age tribes into Britain began to alter the balance of the indigenous Stone Age communities, the one-sided clash of these two cultures finally began in earnest.

It was around 2500 BCE that the so-called Beaker folk migration to Britain began in large numbers. They were much shorter in stature than the tall long-skulled Neolithics and had rounded skulls, causing archaeologists of the 19th century to live by the maxim 'Long head/longbarrow, round head/roundbarrow'.[4] But to the Neolithics, the degree of control which the Beaker folk exerted over the making of their bronze weapons and jewellery revealed them as magicians to be regarded carefully and with awe. The Beaker folk also offered a new and unorthodox psychology in the disposal of their dead. Rather than returning their new dead to the customary communal long-barrows in the manner of the Neolithics, these metal-workers instead isolated their most 'impressive' individuals in prominently-placed roundbarrows, surrounding them with large pottery urns, or beakers, alongside their grandest belongings and trinkets, as though ready for the next world. As the French archaeologist Jean-Pierre Mohen commented in his quote at the beginning of this chapter, Bronze Age society was not interested in the magic and control of those who worked the metal but in 'the individuality of the person who wore it'.

The downlands of Neolithic Wessex are dotted with the barrow-cemeteries of the great Bronze Age power-leaders, from the Avebury area on the north Downs all the way south beyond Stonehenge. These roundbarrow graves have yielded up some of the richest prehistoric items of all antiquity, and excavations at the early Bronze Age Manton Barrow on the Marlborough Downs revealed the grave goods of a mighty female leader, showing that the power of the Great Goddess had not just somehow melted away in the furious heat of the early Bronze Age. Within the Manton Barrow, the great woman had been first interred in a dress or shroud and then surrounded by a wealth of grave-goods. Three bronze awls, two incense cups, a collared urn, a beautiful and polished shale necklace of 150 beads and a bronze knife with a pommel of amber were discovered alongside three large rare beads, each different and each decorated with bands of gold and bronze.

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[1] Arthur Cotterell, *Oxford Reference Dictionary of World Mythology*

[2] Nicholas Thomas, *A Guide to Prehistoric England*

[3] & [4] Lloyd & Jennifer Laing, *The Origins of Britain*

But the hierarchy which had developed around bronze weapons continued to push the tribes apart, as Aubrey Burl explains:

> *'Over several centuries the intruders mingled increasingly with the natives, sometimes peacefully, sometimes as overlords, sometimes by conquest. Their efficient archery equipment, their copper and bronze knives ... their custom of burying their dead singly, sometimes under round mounds, made these strangers awesome figures to the indigenous people.'*[5]

Not only were the communal longbarrow burials disappearing but, by the middle of the Bronze Age, even the roundbarrows of powerful women were everywhere being superseded by new roundbarrows full of one-man-and-his-glamorous-grave-goods.

The beginnings of patriarchal society started right here with the discovery of metal. For this was the very first moment when great physical power alone could guarantee a person's place in the community – and that person was almost certain to have always been male. But, most importantly, the arrival of metals meant a severe shift in the possibilities of what violence could achieve. Whereas in the Neolithic period a successful stabbing would have been a considerable achievement, with the coming of bronze weapons bodies could be ripped asunder, limbs hacked off and enemies decapitated. Casualties in these new inter-tribal squabbles were suddenly more brutalised than ever before and there were far more deaths than Neolithic tribes had previously witnessed. As the writer Anne Bancroft has noted: 'The killing time was beginning.'[6]

Take, for example, an argument over land boundaries between Neolithic tribes. Perhaps one set of claimants would have made a pact with their nearest relatives in order to cause the other side to back down. Perhaps this action would have backfired and caused the other side to seek allies in more distant neighbours. Even if this argument had developed into a difficult and protracted problem which caused a great schism between the two groups, both sides would only have been able to do extremely minor damage to each other because of the limited use of available stone weapons. It is for this reason that the early Neolithic tribes were so much more peaceful – even limited war is difficult to conduct when close combat with sharpened sticks and stones is the order of the day. And in those times of such small populations, however great individual fighters may have been, the community would have been loath to send them out and risk losing an essential part of their social system unless victory was guaranteed. For the deaths of such warriors could have set a small community back years. But the coming of the Bronze Age, by the sheer extremity of its violence, changed all this and it is frightening to imagine the reaction of the first Stone Age people to have faced bronze weapons. At this point, the whole nature of Humanity's capabilities shifted and this brought with it staggering psychological implications. It has been suggested that our legend of the faeries as people who lived in Neolithic burial mounds and detested iron of any kind is a race memory of the bewildered Neolithic survivors of tribes who had met horribly violent deaths at the hands of incomers bearing bronze swords.

Neolithic malingering

As we have learned, prehistory is too often taught as though it fitted neatly into compartments, but this is rarely the case. The three Ages of Humanity as defined by the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages were only invented by a Scandinavian scientist in the middle of the 1800s, and have little bearing on the true unfolding of prehistory. Many of the ancient tribes were not only wary of change but actively fearful of it. And when the first discovery of metal had been made by those earliest eastern Bronze Age tribes, they would have found themselves surrounded by people still in the Stone Age. Even if they had been on fine terms with these Stone Age neighbours, it is unfathomable that those wary conservative neighbours would have rushed aboard the Bronze Age bandwagon.[7] Technology moved so very slowly that even improvements in stone tools would only have been incorporated by others once their worth had been thoroughly proven. Indeed, the only immediate Bronze Age influence upon many of those Neolithic tribes was an upgrading in their qualities of flint-knapping techniques until superb flint arrowheads appeared which were direct copies of bronze examples. That they were still made individually rather than in the bronze workers' moulds meant little to those tribes still in the Stone Age. Until the coming of battle, that is, at which point the deadly flight of bronze-tipped arrows would have been out of all proportion to those flying from the side of the Stone Agers, and a humiliating and bloody rout would have ensued. After such a sobering experience, the bronze swords and other arms of the metal-workers would have suddenly had considerable appeal to the Neolithic tribes.

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[5] **Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles***

[6] **Anne Bancroft, *Origins of the Sacred***

The violent aspect of the coming Bronze Age specifically concerned women, for it was to turn them into cowering, children-hugging victims, the unfortunate beginnings of what was to become the archetypal female situation. This further empowered the men and the pendulum swung so far this way that the Neolithic period was actually forced to a close by this discovery of bronze. It was subsequently used in such a successfully violent manner that those Stone Age tribes who refused to 'progress' met very bloody demises.

By the end of this period, men knew that they were fathers. They also knew that their importance was increasing due to the daily need for physical protection against other Bronze Age tribes in search of space. In his huge book *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*, Aubrey Burl has written of the difficult choices facing the families in search of new lands at this time:

> *'...by the mid-second millennium in Britain there can have been few vast areas left of unused, fertile, easily worked soil. Once a whole district had been settled any large band of migrants had only a few choices: ... forcibly take over land already occupied; to split into family groups that might search for unexplored glens and uplands; or to travel together to distant, hitherto unexplored parts, something that might be forced upon them by the hostility of other people reluctant to allow strangers to settle on their borders.'*

It was the combination of these three elements – the discovery of metals, men's new knowledge of their place in fatherhood, and the population rising in a shrinking space – which was to ultimately capsize the Great Goddess culture. As more and more people attempted to live within more protected and more restricted space, so came the rise of the first Patriarchy, the age of the Chieftains.

The continuation of megalithic culture 1

When the great tooled trilithons of Stonehenge were finally erected on Salisbury Plain in around 1500 BCE, the first megalithic culture as we have come to understand it in its Great Goddess form was finally at an end. For the great stones of Stonehenge were not the work of the indigenous Neolithic tribes, but a rare example of the Beaker folk creating their own stone circle. Aubrey Burl writes of the Beaker folk: 'More commonly they used existing monuments for the deposition of their dead, perhaps because they considered such places to have acquired a sacred aura.'[8] As if to subconsciously illustrate the force of this new phallic period, people of the Bronze Age erected great single standing stones across the British Isles. In the land around the river Wysg in South Wales, great stones were planted all around the hill of Myarth[G] whilst two great long stones stood on the flatland between the confluence of the rivers Wysg and the Grwyne

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[7] It is estimated that the world's first bronze-workers, the Hittites of the Middle East, kept their secret for over 1,000 years.

[8] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*. In Chapter 5, Burl writes: 'Sometimes, the second phase of Stonehenge being an example, they may have built a stone circle themselves.'

Fawr.[9] Solitary longstones such as the Maen Llia[G] and the many standing stones of the Gower peninsula[G] are typical monuments of Wales, though Hirfaen Gwyddog,[G] to the far west, is a real rarity. This stone, which marks both the boundary of three ancient farms and also the boundary of Cardigan and Carmarthen, stands in an area infamous for the almost total destruction of its antiquities by landowners during the 18th century. But Hirfaen Gwyddog's survival as an official multiple boundary marker shows that later people throughout history continued to respond positively to megaliths if there was no chance of recrimination from the authorities. In southern Cornwall, the Land's End peninsula was covered with such stones as the enormous Carfury Menhir,[10] the long stone of Gun Rith,[11] the Boswens stone below Chûn Quoit,[G] the Pridden Menhir[12] and Blind Fiddler and Tresvennack Pillar.[13] Alignments of standing stones were erected all over Britain, mainly in configurations of two and three. The most famous examples remaining in Britain are probably the magnificent Anglesey pair called Penrhos-Feilw,[G] the three conglomerate phalli at Trellech in Monmouthshire known as Harold's Stones[G] and the coastal site of Ballochroy[G] on the west coast of the Kintyre peninsula. In the area of the Brigantes, two known alignments of five longstones were erected, though neither has survived complete. Nowadays, the Five Kings slump lifeless and decrepit on a hillside in modern Northumberland. But further south in Bronze Age Yorkshire, five twenty-foot stones were placed in alignment just south of the sacred Ure–Swale Plateau.[G] Three of these surviving giants, now commonly known as the Devil's Arrows, still remain in their original places on the outskirts of Boroughbridge beside the foul A1 trunkroad. Their tops have been weathered and eroded by the constant rain so that each gigantic stone truly resembles a megalithic arrow hurled into the ground, just as its legend tells. It was a Herculean act of devotion which built this largest stone alignment in the islands just south of the river Ure, for these people had no good building stone of their own and had to search far out of their area. Burl has suggested that the five twenty-foot longstones were quarried from Plumpton Rocks near Knaresborough around nine miles away.[14] As the menhirs of this monument are all within a few feet of being the tallest in the entire British culture, it is probable that each monolith was in actuality around twenty-five feet long, allowing around five feet of stone to have been embedded in the ground. Yet here they stood, five sculpted behemoths strung out together across 400 yards of sacred land. We can only imagine the devastating effect that this monument in its original setting would have had on pilgrims to the site.[15] Intriguingly, the three remaining stones show evidence of having been tooled by timber-workers. There were at least six henges across the Ure–Swale Plateau, and many are known to have had timber rather than stone circles within their ditches, suggesting that these same timber-workers tooled the stones of the Devil's Arrows.

Throughout the Bronze Age, the new power men continued to have themselves buried in prime positions beside the verdant ancient Neolithic trackways. In Dorset, their dominant roundbarrows still proliferate proud and unploughed in the area around Thomas Hardy's monument, whilst on Salisbury Plain, hundreds of roundbarrow cemeteries litter the area around Deering/Durrington and across Normanton Down opposite Stonehenge. Twenty miles to the north, along the ridgeways of northern Wiltshire, endless rows of white chalk barrows full of rich grave goods stood overlooking the Avebury monuments. The communal splendours of Silbury and Avebury now served these Bronze Age chiefs in a countryside which was quickly running out of space. The crude farming techniques of the Neolithic age which had wreaked havoc across the downlands of Britain were now exacerbated by the much greater expectations of the Bronze Age incomers, and entire landscapes were never to recover from this wholesale over-farming, much of it eventually reverting to heathlands of barren wilderness.

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[9] The Growing Stone is at 4. a) 4

[10] Carfury Menhir is at O.S. 203.440340

[11] Gun Rith standing stone is close to the Merry Maidens at 203.429245

[12] Pridden Menhir is at O.S. 203.417266

[13] The Blind Fiddler is at O.S. 203.425283 and Tresvennack Pillar is at O.S. 203.442278

[14] Aubrey Burl, *From Carnac to Callanish*

[15] The present location of only one of the missing Devil's Arrows is now known. It was removed around 1582, according to *Camden's Britannia*, who described it as having been 'lately pulled down, by some that hoped in vaine to find treasure'. The stone was subsequently used to repair a river bridge in nearby Aldborough. Nothing physical remains of the lost fifth stone, though it was always a well-known piece of local folklore.

Over 3,000 years had passed since the Neolithic people had completed the construction of the very first European temple at Kercado in Brittany, and even the great longbarrows of West Kennett,[G] Fussell's Lodge and Wayland's Smithy[G] were by now over 2,000 years old. Indeed, so vast were the time scales of Neolithic culture that the chambers of West Kennett longbarrow would have already been closed for over 500 years by the time that the trilithons of Stonehenge were finally erected on Salisbury Plain. Stonehenge, built by the Bronze Age incomers and unlike all of the megalithic culture which had preceded it, was not a rough stone monument at all. It had little in common with its distant predecessors, employing a degree of finish more akin to the Bronze Age Lion Gate entrance to the Greek citadel of Mycenae or the lintels of the tomb of Agamemnon, 200 yards below that citadel.[16]

After Stonehenge, the building of megalithic monuments elsewhere in the British Isles deteriorated in both size and excellence of construction. In Cumbria, the enormous and picturesque Great Mother rings of the Neolithic were followed by tiny Bronze Age boulder affairs like those at Castlehowe Scar and the Oddendale circles. In Aberdeenshire, the large stone circles of the earliest Neolithic period, with their huge Recumbent stones weighing up to fifty tons, were replaced in the Bronze Age by miniature monuments with tiny Recumbent stones, such as those circles at Cairnfauld, Auld Kirk O'Tough and Esslie the Greater,[17] or peculiar boulder adaptations such as South Ythsie, Raich[18] and Cullerie.[G] Some stone circles became so small and perfunctory that nowadays they are unnoticeable in the summertime, easily hidden behind vegetation, as I discovered at Kingston Russell stone circle in Dorset. But the best example of the decadent Bronze Age circle must surely be that stone 'ring' on Hampton Down near the Valley of Stones,[G] also in Dorset. In 1939 Alexander Thom had a problem making his survey and talked of sixteen stones in a circle around ten paces across. By 1964, the archaeologist Geoffrey Wainwright was surprised to now discover twenty-eight stones in the ring. When I visited the circle in 1996 CE, I was shocked to discover the tiny stature of the stones and felt sure that only nine at the most had belonged to prehistory. The others appeared more like field clearance boulders, and I was unsurprised to subsequently read that the Hampton Down circle may even have shifted slightly from its original situation.

Some Bronze Age power-plays at Neolithic sites

In some parts of Britain, Neolithic monuments were consciously modified for different uses by later Bronze Age incomers, whilst other sites appear to have been vandalised and even destroyed. Aubrey Burl has pointed to the destruction of Cultoon stone circle on the Scottish Isle of Islay as an example of megalithic intolerance and 'antagonisms between prehistoric sects where irreconcilable beliefs demanded at least the adaptation if not destruction of the others' monuments'.[19] Excavators of the Gorsey Bigbury henge in Somerset believe that this Neolithic ritual site was consciously vandalised by Beaker folk who appear to have thrown down the large timber entrance gateposts before thoroughly desecrating its ditches with human garbage. At Moncrieffe in central Scotland, an involved Neolithic ring-cairn constructed upon an earthwork henge was zealously cleared away by the incoming metal-workers merely to accommodate their bronze and subsequent iron workings. On the magnificently-placed and legendary Scottish hill of Cairnpapple,[G] the original Neolithic arrangement of three natural boulders and an arc of large standing stones stood for 1,000 years before it was overthrown by Beaker folk. These incomers replaced the monument with a henge and a ring of twenty-four standing stones. This site itself was then used for a great length of time, with modifications, until the onset of the Iron Age, when four new burials were inserted into the ditch.

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[16] The gigantic tholos tombs of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon were once thought to have been the blueprint for such chambers as West Kennett longbarrow and Belas Knap, until they were discovered to have been built around 1,500 years later. Antiquaries of 100 years ago still wished that the British monuments had Classical Greek and Egyptian connections. The United States is currently in a similar cultural position, wishing to have British-type monuments. Its most celebrated 'ancient monument', first known by the British-sounding name of Jonathan Pattee's House, subsequently became famous as Mystery Hill, but has recently been embarrassingly renamed America's Stonehenge! This loss of dignity is compounded by this monument's physical similarity to a maze of Cornish fogous, earth-fast Mother monuments as at odds with the sky-heavy Stonehenge as any megalithic construction could ever be.

[17] Esslie the Greater is at O.S. 38.716916

[18] South Ythsie is at O.S. 30.885304 and Raich is at O.S. 29.619436

[19] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

In the distant Outer Hebrides, it may simply have been another Bronze Age power-play which caused the chambered cairn to have been inserted into the tiny Callanish centre circle.[G] Certainly the Neolithic henge at Arbor Low[G] suffered similarly when a huge Bronze Age barrow was erected directly upon the southern bank of the monument itself. But many of the changes to the megalithic sites were made for purely practical reasons, such as those at Clettraval on North Uist,[G] where the Neolithic chambered cairn was 'improved' to accommodate a stone residential wheel-house. On the mountain of Uneval,[G] just to the south of Clettraval, another Iron Age house was built into the Neolithic cairn known as Leacach an Tigh Cloiche. It is unlikely that these ancient house builders would have been unaware of the burial site which they were desecrating, for North Uist would have still been a remote spot with few such powerful megalithic structures. But since the incomers at Uneval also inserted a corn-drying room into the cairn, we must presume that such vandalism was nothing to them.

The continuation of megalithic culture 2

There is evidence that the weather so deteriorated in the middle Bronze Age that it would have caused extreme hardship amongst the population – hardship that may have been difficult to face after millennia of good living. Every further crisis added to the miseries of this increasingly warlike age, whose protagonists now began to import both horses and wheeled transport into Britain as the heady broth of early modern so-called Civilisation began to coagulate and form. And all the time, more and more people entered Britain in wave upon endless migratory wave. Bronze Age settlements such as the Mother hill of Mam Tor in the wilds of northern Derbyshire and Grimspound on Dartmoor,[G] whose situations would have been considered too harsh and austere for farmers at the height of the Neolithic, were now welcomed as centres of refuge by people desperate to return to ways which had once appeared to have been so guaranteed. For, despite their positions, Mam Tor and Grimspound had at least been built over freshwater springs which enabled long-term settlement. And though the stone circles and avenues of Dartmoor are tiny in comparison to the great Neolithic monuments of 1,500 years previously, they did at least represent a continuity of Dartmoor culture at a time when continuity everywhere was beginning to fail. These monuments were family affairs made of endless low stones which everywhere seem to climb long-grassed hills and cross bare moorlands, ending at either a single longbarrow or longstone.

The double stone rows which survive at Shovel Down[G] run parallel for around 400 yards before diverging wildly as they descend towards the valley of the river Teign. The Plague Market, nine miles to the south-west,[G] stands on a flat level plateau of magical moor filled with what appear to be megaliths of the little people – standing stones, parallel stone rows and a tiny late stone circle. At Ringmoor, the low stone avenues veer off across the moor becoming increasingly dilapidated until they are no more than oddments of distant uprights near the horizon. Similarly scaled contemporary monuments are found on Stanton Moor in the Peak District, where the ruins of seventy Bronze Age cairns stand in the neighbourhood of a small contemporary stone circle known as the Nine Ladies.[G] Here on Stanton Moor, even the outlying Fiddler Stone to the west of the circle is only three-and-a-half-feet tall. In Cumbria, to the north, there are similar Bronze Age ceremonial sites on Moor Divock, where the contiguous low stones of the legendary Cockpit stone circle still remain in position high to the east of Ullswater. But the neighbouring line of stone circles and ring-cairns which formerly marched across the southern foot of nearby Askham Fell were considered by the Victorians to have been of such insignificant size and importance that they were all carelessly modified into megalithic shooting hides during the late 1800s.

But as the megaliths of the Bronze Age became smaller and smaller in size, certain major Neolithic monuments maintained their importance, and would continue to do so. Indeed, Aubrey Burl has written: 'There is certainly a noticeable correlation between the postulated Iron Age provinces of the British Isles and architectural regions in stone circles.'[20] Time appeared to accelerate as the distinction between the ages of metals became ever more blurred. Dating at major circles such as Stenness[G] and the marvellous Irish RSC of Droumbeg has revealed uninterrupted use of these monuments throughout the Iron Age and beyond, into historical times.

In his book *From Carnac to Callanish*, Aubrey Burl cites the lunar temple of Callanish itself as an example of continued worship down the ages, writing '...as late as the Iron Age natives of Lewis remembered, perhaps even still celebrated, the times when the midsummer moon reached its southern extreme.' Indeed, the mysteries of Callanish were still being applauded by the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus as late as 55 BCE. In Chapter 6, we saw that the Iron Age people still clearly remembered the significance of the Neolithic temple and understood its place in the 18.6 year lunar cycle, and it seems pertinent here to requote Diodorus in full:

'...beyond the land of the Kelts there lies in the ocean an island ... and there is ... both a magnificent sacred precinct ... and a notable temple ... spherical in shape... The moon as viewed from this island appears to be but a little distance from the earth ... and the god visits the island every nineteen years.'

Only Callanish fits all the descriptions given by Diodorus, for only Callanish has the correct latitude of 58°, allowing the moon to appear to ride across the spines of the horizon's mountains. To Mediterraneans who were only used to seeing the moon shining directly overhead, such a phenomenon as a land with a low and apparently controllable moon would have been regarded as deeply magical. And that such events were being reported at the time when Julius Caesar landed on the shore of southern England suggests that the warlike and decadent Iron Agers still retained much original Neolithic ritual in their worship, if only in the more remote parts of Britain.

The role of the stones in Iron Age religion & daily life

It is important to remember that all the metal-working incomers who were changing Britain so drastically during this period had originated on various parts of the European mainland. By the late Bronze and early Iron Age, European paths had crossed so many times on that continent that everyone had influenced everybody else, even if it was just in the form of a reminder to keep out of each other's way. Late megalithic monuments abound throughout Europe, a confusing hotchpotch causing intrigue and uncertainty amongst scholars. The Goloring henge near Coblenz in Germany has been dated to the 6th century bce, whilst the large Ditched Rectangle at Libenice in the former Czechoslovakia was built as late as 300 BCE. That the cultures who built these throwback monuments were still adept in their building is evident in the way in which significant astronomical orientations were incorporated into their structures.

In modern Sweden, the archaeologists appear to be in complete confusion over the dates of one particularly large megalithic site. The huge stone longship known as Ale's Stenar (pronounced 'Olay's Steenar') which stands heroically upon a coastal hilltop in the Skane region, was once considered to have been a Viking work built around 900 years after the birth of Jesus Christ. But it is nowadays often described by Swedish archaeologists as being a Bronze Age monument, though 4,000 years separate these two suggested dates of construction. Their remote situation in northern Europe seems to have allowed the Scandinavians to continue to perfect their megalithic ways unchallenged deep into the Christian period. Unlike Britain and the rest of Europe, whose megalithic cultures had faltered by the middle Bronze Age, megalithic Scandinavia somehow achieved a continuity of monument building which quietly maintained the same high standard for millennia longer than its neighbours. The tradition of stone longships is very strong in Sweden, and other powerful examples still exist: at the famous Old Uppsala cemetery in Uppland north of Stockholm, and at Anundshogen in Vastmanland,[21] where the longest examples are over fifty yards long. To further confuse the issue, a supposed 11th-century runic inscription is carved on the tallest stone of the Vastmanland longship which reads: 'Folkvid raised all the stones in memory of his son, Anund's brother. Vren carved the runes.' Of course, this may have been carved hundreds, even thousands of years after the stones were really erected, but its weight does add to the accumulating body of circumstantial evidence.

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[20] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

Compared with these fine undatable monuments, the degenerate British examples of megalithic longships which exist at Brekon on the north coast of Yell in the Shetland Isles and on Balladoole Hill in the Isle of Man are very sorry things indeed. Back in Sweden, Ale's Stenar on its sandy hilltop was the biggest longship achievement of all. Its construction exuded the authority of a people still at the height of their culture, the largest pillars each highly reminiscent of Long Meg,[G] Cumbria's enormous sandstone outlier.

But the difficulties which archaeologists have encountered in dating Ale's Stenar should not be considered in any way a problem exclusive to Swedish prehistory, for such confusion also happens in the British Isles, albeit to a less extreme degree. For example, it must be remembered that the legendary Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, the five-foot-tall granite longstone which stands at the centre of Ireland's mythical hill of Tara, also dates from the Iron Age, as does Long Tom on the Marlborough Downs. This narrowly-hewn eight-foot sarsen stands beside the Neolithic trackway from Avebury to the Marlborough Mount, its base overgrown by a tatty but defiant hawthorn. On Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, the great earthen Rectangle of King Arthur's Hall, with its spiky inner walls of nowadays stooping standing stones and central quagmire, has often been cited as a far later megalithic monument than the five surrounding stone circles at whose navel this meeting-place was situated.[22] Some archaeologists have even suggested a possible medieval provenance for King Arthur's Hall, though no excavations have proved anything so far. Further evidence of Cornwall's continuing late dedication to the Great Goddess could, until recently, be seen at the remains of an Iron Age fogou,[23] two-and-a-half miles north-east of King Arthur's Hall, just beyond Showery Tor. But the site has lately become too ruinous to visit. These megalithic wombs were mainly constructed within huge Iron Age stone hedges or earthworks for the promotion of contemplation and communion with the Great Goddess. And four complete examples still survive intact at the Land's End, these being Pendeen Vau,[G] Boleigh,[G] Carn Euny fogou in the Iron Age village[G] and the huge Halligye fogou near Gweek.[G]

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[21] The Swedish scholar Sune Lindqvist has suggested that each stone represented a warrior at his oar – a Viking 'trooping the colour'. This may have taken place with the king renewing oaths of allegiance as he walked around the megalithic longship, each great warrior at his post, or stone.

[22] With regard to King Arthur's Hall, a later date of construction would hardly alter its likely role as a general place of assembly, merely extend the megalithic time boundaries of Bodmin Moor. The five stone circles which King Arthur's Hall would have most likely served are Stannon,[G] Fernacre,[G] the Trippet Stones and the Stripple Stones,[G] and the Leaze circle bisected by a field wall at a farm to the near south-east. This area so resounds with remoteness that a visit to King Arthur's Hall soon explains the apparently crazy suggestion of archaeologists that the site may have been a medieval construction.

[23] I found this fogou on a post-war ER edition of the 1" Ordnance Survey map number 136, but I have not searched for this site except for a perfunctory attempt during 1993 CE. Unfortunately, this part of the moor below Showery Tor is so strewn with natural megalithic litter that even Ian Cooke, Cornwall's own fogou man, was unaware of it. Future fogou seekers should search just to the east of Roughtor Marsh (pronounced 'Rowter', to rhyme with 'Pow'). The general O.S. number is 201.15.81.

Iron Age settlement of the sacred Neolithic Mother hills

The building of settlements on the sacred summits of Great Mother hills, which had started as early as the Bronze Age in the case of Mam Tor, continued in earnest as the Iron Age grew in ferocity. In the chaos of the day, settlements and refuge became more important than ritual and worship, and deep earthworks of banks and ditches were thrown up around several of the summits of these once untouchable and sacred eminencies. Before its conversion into a hillfort, the great Aberdeenshire Mother hill known as Tap O'Noth had long been a focal point for such Recumbent stone circles as the Corrstones, Templand,[24] Wheedlemont Hill, Candy, both Hillhead and Bankhead of Clatt, Ardlair and Stonehead. Twenty-five hundred years later, when the Tap O'Noth became a refuge from the Iron Age outside, its eternal aura of safety would have been extremely comforting in this alarming new world. A small defensive camp was also built on the conical summit of sacred Dunnideer, six miles to the east. Similar defences were raised on the great Bridgit hill of Breedon in the English Midlands, whilst the twin sacred hills of Torbhlaren and Dunadd in western Scotland[G] were both such rocky and insurmountable precipices that rudimentary defences alone rendered them utterly impregnable.

But the singlemost extreme display of Iron Age defences were those added to the elegant Maiden Hill outside Dorchester. The hill's eastern Neolithic camp and enormous 600-yard-long bankbarrow, which ran like a central spine along the length of the Maiden hill, were now enclosed by three deep layers of Iron Age banks and ditches. Finally, a confounding earthwork maze of entranceways at the west transformed this sacred hilltop into the bristling armoured fortress of Maiden Castle. The builders of the fortress were clearly paranoid about running out of ammunition, for the site's excavator, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, discovered a silted-up Iron Age armament hoard of over 54,000 pieces of slingshot.

All over Iron Age Britain, Neolithic camps such as the Trundle in Sussex were modified and prepared for defence. At Hambledon Hill in Dorset,[G] the comparatively light ditches of the Neolithic Stepleton enclosure were undercut by deep and ugly new trenches, which carved a great cleft into the south side of the hill, leaving it looking ominous and threatening. In Devon, the Neolithic enclosure of Hembury[G] was also encircled with deep defences, whilst on Midsummer Hill in Herefordshire, similar banks and ditches were dug right around the crest of the hill, enclosing its Neolithic longbarrow and Bronze Age roundbarrows. In neighbouring Gloucestershire the former Neolithic causewayed enclosure of Cold Slad[G] became the bustling Crickley Hill camp, a major Iron Age sentry point overlooking the vital waterways of the Severn Valley. Finally, to the far north of England at the head of the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland, similar fortifications were built on the sacred Neolithic hills of Yeavering Bell, Lordenshaw and Dod Law.[25]

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the Iron Age sites where the Great Goddess retained vestiges of her ancient power, nor is it meant to be. But such a preliminary list does help to quash the mistaken notion that there was little prehistoric continuity down the long ages of Stone, Bronze & Iron. This building body of circumstantial evidence of the Goddess effectively allows us to now extend the megalithic time boundaries at least to the end of the Iron Age, for we have here seen evidence of megalithic chambers constructed, earthworks dug and menhirs erected right up to the coming of the Romans. Perhaps now is the time to see if these fieldwork discoveries in any way correlate with Roman descriptions of what they found in Britain in the early years after 43 CE.

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[24] Corrstones stone circle is at O.S. 37.510271 and Templand stone circle is at O.S. 37.483269

[25] Yeavering Bell is at O.S. 75.938293, Lordenshaw hillfort is at O.S. 81.055993 and Dod Law hillfort is at O.S. 75.005315

The opinions of some Classical writers on the Druids of Iron Age Britain

When the Roman Legions finally arrived in Britain in 43 CE, they knew that they were entering a land of mystery and, most likely, trouble. The armies had been forewarned of the British Isles in an impressive manner by the writings of many Classical authors, including Emperor Julius Caesar one century before. Despite his decision to cast the British tribes as barbarians in his writings, Caesar nevertheless allowed his reluctant admiration to spill out here and there, especially when describing the mysterious religious sect known as the Druids:

'The institution of the Druids is thought to have originated in Britain, and to have been thence introduced into Gaul, and even now, those who wish to become more accurately acquainted with it, generally repair thither for the sake of learning it… They are said to learn thoroughly a great number of verses. On that account, some continue their education for twenty years. Nor do they deem it lawful to commit those things to writing … they would not have their tenets published … they would not have those who learn them, by trusting to letters, neglect the exercise of memory… They also dispute largely concerning the stars and their motion…'[26]

Caesar is here describing what was clearly already an ancient system in Britain. Whether the Druids commanded love, fear or just plain mystification amongst the general population is unknown, but they were deeply entrenched in the social system. As Caesar continues: 'The Druids … do not pay taxes with the others; they have exemption from warfare, and the free use of all things.' This aloofness from general society only comes over a great deal of time, for non-tax payers in a tax-paying society must be so secure in the total hierarchy of their position that it becomes an unspoken, unchallenged and accepted way. There is no more perfect modern analogy than the British public's recent reaction when they first realised that Queen Elizabeth had never paid taxes. Her royal predecessors' remove from normal society was such a given that no one had even considered the issue before. And so it must have been with the Druids of Iron Age Britain. To be perceived as a kind of spiritual royalty is in itself proof of the timeless position that the Druid would have occupied in the minds of Iron Age people.

Druidism clearly began in Britain as an ancient off-shoot of Great Goddess worship, and of Bree in particular. For 'the corner stone of Druidism' was the great Circle of Existence known as the Abred, literally 'O'Brid'. Bridisms abound throughout Druidry. *The Druid Source Book* suggests:

'The Brython, who gave its name to this island … were probably of Pryd's retinue… In this island was Druidism first regularly established … Prydain, from Pryd, which is Time, Season … Beauty, Comeliness.'

Reports by Pomponius Mela, written in the first century after Christ, told of the Druids' 'meeting in secret either in a cave or in secluded dales', in which case the alternative name for a rock shelter, 'abri', may well have begun as a Druid word. Even in later Christian times, the hagiography of St. Bridgit had her born and raised by a Druid.

Like Julius Caesar, Pomponius Mela also referred to the Druids' remarkable 'course of instruction lasting as long as twenty years'. The singling out of this learning system as one of peculiar thoroughness does tend to imply that similar methods of equal thoroughness were then unheard-of elsewhere in the world. Finally, Pomponius Mela shines a direct light on to the Druids' belief systems when he writes '…they even used to defer the completion of business and the payment of debts until their arrival in another world.' The writer Lucan, a contemporary of Pomponius Mela, confirmed this when he wrote that the Druids 'tell us that the spirit has a body again elsewhere, and that death … is but the mid-point of long life'. The Druids clearly practised a remarkable magic for, two centuries later, their memory was still such that Hippolytus could write '...the Kelts believe in their Druids as seers and prophets because they can foretell certain events by the Pythagorean reckoning and calculations.' And as late as the 3rd century, the Roman book *Numerianus XIV* reported that a Druidess in a Gaulish tavern had successfully foretold the future of the Emperor Diocletian when he was still a low-ranking officer policing the surly tribes of the Gallic Tongri.

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[26] *The Druid Source Book*, compiled and edited by John Matthews. To avoid the paraphrases and Chinese whispers of popular scholars, all quotes in this section ('The opinions of some Classical writers on …') are taken from this definitive book.

The Druids were never represented as innovators by contemporary Roman writers, but they were regarded as living repositories of a great ancient wisdom, what Edward Davies called 'jealous preservers of early and primitive discipline, traditions, doctrines, customs and opinions'. I have left out a great deal of the negative things which the Romans said about the ancient Britons, not because I wish to whiten the Britons' sepulchres overly but because the political pressures on Roman historians to present a subverted view of Iron Age Britain would have been intense – the Legions were, after all, here to subdue the tribes and steal their mineral deposits. And besides, there has always been a tendency to demonise and dehumanise one's enemy by dwelling on their faults and recording their basest customs. It is far easier for soldiers to kill men, women and children if their own propagandists have first instilled into them the idea that they are, in some way, saving these people from a wretched barbarian existence. For example, the Roman writers in Britain all lingered with relish over the admittedly large emphasis on human sacrifice in the Druid religion. But like recent non-smokers in ultra-sanctimonious mood, the Romans' continuous chiding of Druid sacrifice is largely because they themselves had only just given up such things, and were clearly still repulsed but obsessed.

But the wholly negative publishings of early historians, such as Suetonius Paulinus and Pliny, now appear hypocritical to we Moderns. One look at the blueprints for the Roman Colosseum, with its conduits for flushing blood away and trapdoors which sprung wild beasts, is quite enough to glimpse a distinct Nazi-style 'thoroughness' of imagination at work, quite at odds with the Druids' contemporary human sacrifices. For, however far into decay their religion had fallen, the Druids sacrificed in order to make the harvest grow, not for the entertainment of some wretched soulless city-dweller.

By picking out the many instances in which the earliest Roman writers seem genuinely impressed with the Druids, we may at least glimpse a last true picture of the magical British Isles before the Roman Empire's propaganda machine came into operation. This Roman use of writing as a means of propaganda united horribly with the Druid belief that script was 'unfit for the recording of wisdom'. For it meant that, in Britain, the Roman story alone would be remembered, no matter how distorted and unfactual it was. And, of course, the Romans subsequently so muddied the historical waters with ridiculous and impossible tales of the baseness of the ancient British that we ourselves in modern Britain are still getting over it. Having only had Roman propaganda to go on, British intellectuals for many centuries regarded their Roman half as a light relief from that base barbarian seemingly brewing just below the surface of even the most rational of British thinkers. When our ancestors are constantly ridiculed, we ourselves become ridiculous.

Why the Romans were so heavy

We have here been shown clear evidence that the Romans found in Britain the vestiges of a highly organised, spiritually-centred society, though it must be added that this society was clearly in a decline. The Druid influence of perhaps only two or three centuries before had now lapsed into a cloying priest-like role, where the attendance of the Druid was essential at any religious ceremony, however small or private. The Roman writer Strabo summed it up succinctly: 'They never sacrifice without the Druids.' Diodorus Siculus added a more sinister edge when he wrote that the Gauls 'say that offerings to the gods ought only to be made through the mediation of these men ... and it is through their agency that the blessings of the gods should be properly sought'.

The message of these writers seems fairly clear – if traces of the ancient religion still remained in

Britain, then it was all in the care of the Druids. Unfortunately, by making themselves the exclusive repositories of ancient British learning, the Druids also ensured that learning would die at the hands of the most ruthless young empire that the world had then known. We must be in no doubt about the Roman Empire. This was no ancient and benevolent organisation marching forth with misguided desires to improve the lot of barbarian Europe. The Romans who invaded Britain were part of a recent empire less than one century old, born of Julius Caesar's grand and warmongering design. Only two centuries before the invasion of Britain, the Roman government, 'needled by its lack of tradition',[27] had cynically prevailed upon their own historians to create a pantheon of gods in the Classical Greek design. Colin Wilson has suggested that the nature of the Roman psyche ensured that gods of expediency were the best that could be expected.[28] This expediency is revealed as particularly cynical in an extract from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*:

'The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful!'

Such was the spiritual state of the vast Roman military operation now about to enter the mystical islands of the Great Goddess.

Using Roman police measures to detect Iron Age megalithic power

In the spring of 43 CE, 40,000 Roman troops landed unopposed on the east coast of Kent. They pushed forward and met little resistance, except from Caratacus, the defiant king of the eastern British Catuvellaunii, which means 'the best at fighting'. The Roman Emperor Claudius soon arrived to lead his army, but was so encouraged by what he saw that he left for Rome after sixteen days in order to celebrate. The army made a three-pronged attack upon England and Wales, building roads and fortresses on the move. Vespasian, the leader of the southern 2nd Legion, pushed his troops all the way to Exeter in the west, capturing twenty hillforts on the way. At Hod Hill in Dorset,[G] stronger defences were still being built when the Romans attacked the settlement. The inhabitants were expelled and the Legions built their own camp in a corner of the earthwork. Further south, Maiden Castle was attacked so ferociously by the Romans that the inhabitants' ammunition dump of 54,000 slingshot stones lay barely used.

The Roman armies moved swiftly throughout Britain and the rebellious King Caratacus was forced to run with the hill-running Silures of South Wales. By 47 CE, in order to keep his rebellion in Wales, the Romans had erected the vile 200-mile-long Fosse Way, an embanked deadly straight military road running from Lincoln in the north almost to Exeter in the south-east.[29] The Fosse Way stopped for nothing on its entire route, except at the prehistoric mound of Brinklow, a few miles east of Coventry.[30] Here, the road was aligned upon Brinklow from both north and south ends, passing around the site close to its base. Caratacus' rebellion moved north to what he thought would be the safety of the enormous queendom of the Goddess-worshipping Brigantes. But in 51 CE, the Brigantes' Queen Cartimandua betrayed Caratacus and handed him to the Romans. It was an act which was to cost her both her lands and her place as representative of the Great Goddess. For the Brigantes were so outraged at the decision of their queen that they rejected Cartimandua in favour of her temporary king, and the Brigantes' millennia-long rule of matrilinear succession was at an end.

The Roman armies headed generally for exploitable sources of wealth, such as mineral mines, and specifically for the copper mines of Anglesey. But the Romans had more pressing reasons to go to Anglesey, and the infamous Watling Street was built from London to North Wales in preparation. Anglesey had become the last stronghold of the Druids and was, by this time, full of resistance fighters. When Suetonius Paulinus brought his troops to the banks of the Menai Straits looking across the water to Anglesey just 600 yards away, they were confronted by a sight so terrifying that the battle-hardened and worldly Tacitus wrote, in his *Annals*:

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[27] Arthur Cotterell, *An Oxford Dictionary of World Mythology*

[28] Colin Wilson, *The Occult*

[29] This great paranoid military barrier bisected the ancient landscape like a modern motorway. All the trees were cleared on either side of the road to a distance of fifty yards in order to prevent ambushes, and the agger, or bank of the road, was raised far above the surrounding land in order to always maintain the most superior elevation.

[30] Brinklow is at O.S. 140.438796

> *'On the shore stood the opposing army with its dense array of armed warriors, while between the ranks dashed women in black attire like the Furies, with hair dishevelled, waing (sic) brands. All around, the Druids, lifting up their hands to heaven and pouring forth dreadful imprecations, scared our soldiers by the unfamiliar sight, so that, as if their limbs were paralysed, they stood motionless and exposed to wounds.'*

Yet again, we see a worldly Roman writer caught off guard in a description of genuine surprise that the might of the secular Romans could, even for a few moments, have acted 'as if their limbs were paralysed'. But the force of the Legions prevailed and so the last official memories of the Old Religion appeared to have died with the Druids, whose destruction left the Romans unopposed. The Legions now began their task of mining out Britain's great mineral wealth, and discoveries of hamstrung prisoners at North Walean mines in Dolaucothi reveal the Romans to have been excruciating taskmasters. James Wellard has written:

> *'In the worst [gold or flint] mines ... the workers were always fettered and chained together even while working. Some were deliberately hamstrung to eliminate even the dream of escaping. Others were blinded in one eye to brand them as felons.'*

He continues:

> *'...at the Dolaucothi mine ... the underground galleries driven deep into the hillside and the three aqueducts, one of them seven miles long, are proof that many hundreds, perhaps thousands of men were employed in these operations.'*[31]

While the troops of Suetonius Paulinus subdued the rebels of Anglesey, he heard the news of Queen Boudicca's fateful uprising in the east. After the ignominious end of matrilinear succession amongst the Brigantes, so Boudicca, the very last queen of the Great Mother tribes, also fell victim to the Patriarchy just ten years later, in 61 CE. Boudicca's justified but doomed enterprise happened after the rape of her royal daughters by Romans intent on taking the queen's lands. But once she had exacted her enormous and bloody revenge on the local Roman settlements and the city of London, Boudicca's energy was all spent and the final matrilinear British tribe came under Roman influence at last.

The Romans now made severe plans for sacred places of ancient influence such as megalithic monuments, which they recognised as potential political powder kegs which must be policed thoroughly. Indeed, Aubrey Burl has written: 'It may have been the continuing use of Stonehenge by Celtic priests of the Iron Age, the Druids, with their opposition to foreign authority that caused the Romans to wreck the monument.'[32] A Roman military road was built right across the sacred Avebury landscape, climbing the Downs at the ritual site on Morgan's Hill, then aligned directly on Silbury. This military road continued past the Sanctuary and along the sacred valley of the Kennet past the Neolithic Marlborough Mount to the Roman station at Cunetio. From Cunetio northwards, yet another military road passed the former Pagan site at Ogbourne St. George and onwards to the north end of the Downs. In one particularly despicable act, the Roman engineers sent their Ackling Dyke military road right across the Oakley Down barrow cemetery before bisecting the famous Neolithic Dorset cursus on Wyke Down.[G] The Ackling Dyke then careered horribly across the beauty of Cranbourne Chase to align itself on the ancient sacred centre of Badbury Rings.[G] The sacred and social importance of pre-conquest Badbury is mightily illustrated by the four Roman roads which terminate there. The Roman technocrats linked Badbury to Maiden Castle by callously drawing a straight line from one sacred site to the other and then building a road upon that line. They also converted the nearby henge of

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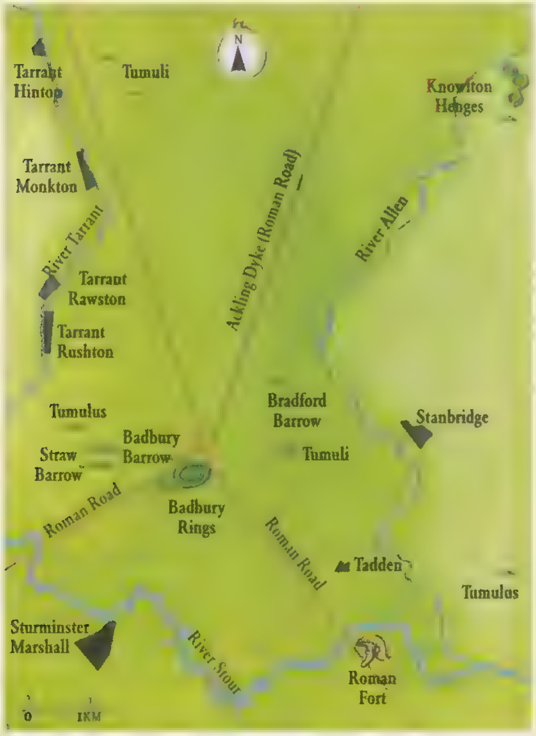
[31] James Wellard, ***In Search of Unknown Britain***

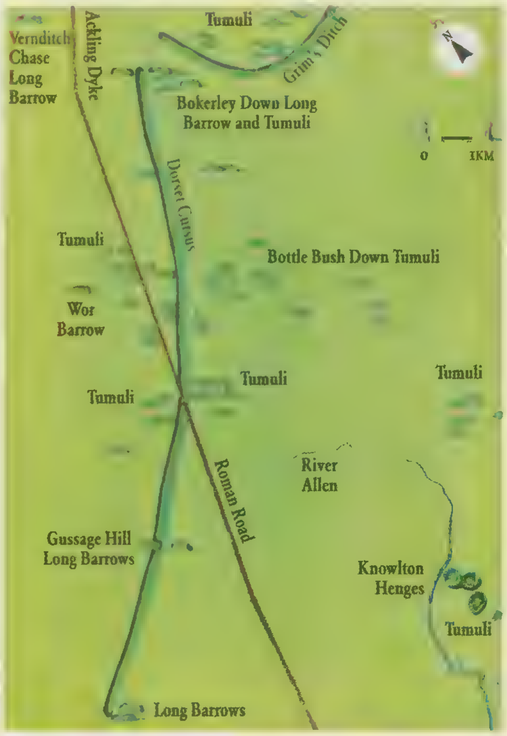
[32] Aubrey Burl, ***The Stone Circles of the British Isles***

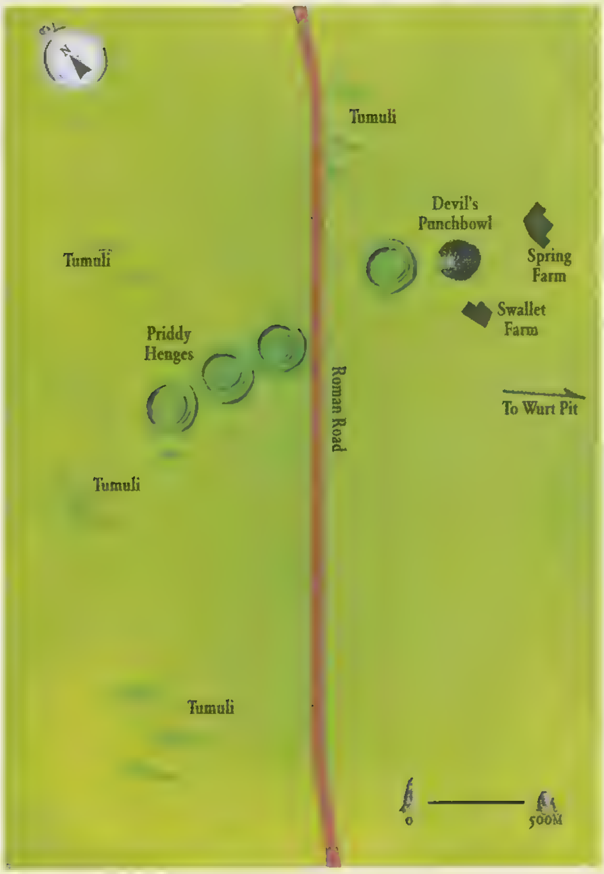
THE BRITISH NEOLITHIC LANDSCAPE ROMANISED

Badbury Romanised

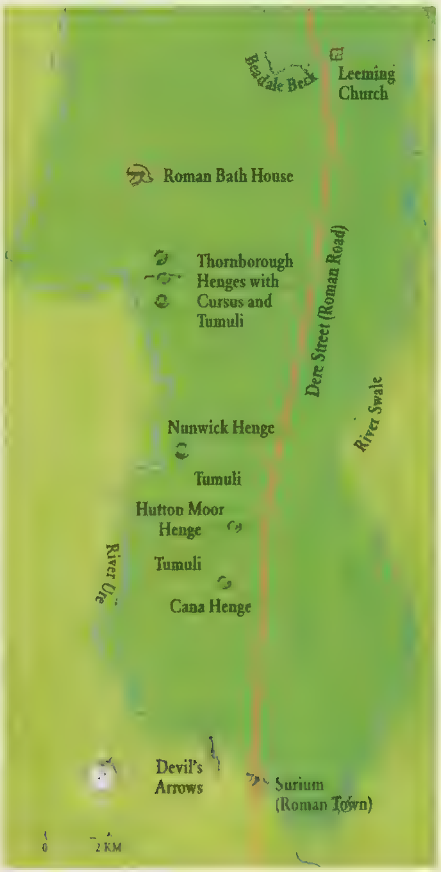

N
Tarrant Hinton
Tumuli
Knowlton Henges
Tarrant Monkton
Ackling Dyke (Roman Road)
River Allen
River Tarrant
Tarrant Rawston
Tarrant Rushton
Tumulus
Bradford Barrow
Stanbridge
Badbury Barrow
Straw Barrow
Tumuli
Roman Road
Badbury Rings
Roman Road
Tadden
Tumulus
Sturminster Marshall
River Stour
Roman Fort
0
1KM

Dorset Cursus Romanised


Verndith Chase Long Barrow
Ackling Dyke
Tumuli
Grim's Ditch
N
Bokerley Down Long Barrow and Tumuli
0
1KM
Dorset Cursus
Tumuli
Bottle Bush Down Tumuli
Wor Barrow
Tumuli
Tumuli
Tumuli
River Allen
Roman Road
Gussage Hill Long Barrows
Knowlton Henges
Tumuli
Long Barrows


N
Tumuli
Devil's Punchbowl
Spring Farm
Tumuli
Swallet Farm
Priddy Henges
Roman Road
To Wurt Pit
Tumuli
Tumuli
0
500M

Priddy Romanised


Bedale Beck
Leeming Church
Roman Bath House
Thornborough Henges with Cursus and Tumuli
Dere Street (Roman Road)
River Swale
Nunwick Henge
Tumuli
Hutton Moor Henge
River Ure
Tumuli
Cana Henge
Devil's Arrows
Surium (Roman Town)
0
2 KM

Ure-Swale Plateau Romanised

Maumbury Rings[G] into a spectacular Roman amphitheatre. Another military road was sent to the great Iron Age fort on Crickley Hill in Gloucestershire, which had obviously maintained its considerable importance since the construction of the Neolithic earthworks of Cold Slad, 3,000 years before on the same site. On the northern Ure–Swale Plateau, a large sacred area between two rivers at the heart of Brigantia, the Romans cynically bisected the entire landscape with their Dere Street military road on their thrust northwards. The site around the enormous Devil's Arrows alignment was clearly unnerving to the Romans, for they built a fortress near the confluence of the two rivers at Isurium, or modern Aldborough, in order to police the situation. The Brigantes were further restricted by the Woldgate, a Roman road built through the Yorkshire Wolds in order to control those still dangerous tribes around the Gypsey Race. Further north at the head of the Cheviots, the sacred centres of Dod Law and Lordenshaw were policed by the military road from Berwick-upon-Tweed, later to be nicknamed 'The Devil's Causeway' with no little accuracy.

In Wales, though the roads were still built, the tightness of the valleys forced kinks into the famed straight roads of the Roman engineers. Leslie Alcock has written:

> *'It took the [Roman] legions less than a decade to reach the river Severn, and virtually a quarter of a century to consolidate their hold beyond it to the Irish Sea. Even then … the Cambrian mountains and their western slopes were never fully pacified.'*[33]

The power of the sacred land around Pen-y-Crug, near Brecon, demanded an entire military station, known as Cicucium, to be built at the nearby confluence of the rivers Wysg and Ysgir. The Roman road known as Sarn Helen here began its long journey west into the mysterious fastness of Wales. Around twelve miles into Sarn Helen's route, the road passes the two now-ruined stone circles of Y Pigwyn, on the slight western slope that leads down to the confluence of the rivers Tywi and Bran. At times, the Roman sense of paranoia manifests itself in revelatory ways; Y Pigwyn is one such example. For within 200 yards of the two tiny circles, the Romans built a temporary camp of greater size than the main camp at Cicucium. Below this, a fort was constructed. All this suggests that the two destroyed Y Pigwyn circles were of extraordinary importance. Here is an example of our being able to detect something of continued prehistoric importance only because of the paranoia of the overlords who followed after. But the most bizarre situation for any Roman military road must be that which cuts across the Neolithic landscape on the slopes of the North Walean hill of Tal-y-Fan.[G] Here, dolmens, standing stones and a tiny stone circle are bisected by a Roman road constructed so far below regular specifications that, in its modern green state, it could easily be mistaken for an ancient hollow way. The military road across Tal-y-Fan is proof that these dominant Technocrats Abroad were either overly paranoid or had genuine reasons for monitoring the precise actions of the British tribes under their control. For, whether or not Britain was once a great source of ancient power, it appears clear that the Romans themselves believed it and, therefore, ruled these islands accordingly.

The coming of Roman Christianity

The Roman army worshipped Mithras, a mysterious deity who appeared to promote a kind of shamanic camaraderie amongst his followers. Mithras had sprung from the furious war god Mithra, a ruthless and avenging, yet wise and all-knowing god. In his radiance, Mithras had much in common with the later Jesus Christ and it was the light of Mithras which was said to precede the rising of the sun. The Roman army erected Mithraiums across Roman Britain, two of which still survive, on Hadrian's Wall and in the sub-basement of a modern building in the City of London. Amongst the riot of religious cults practised back in Rome, Mithraism was the largest by far, though the cult known as Christianity was also gathering momentum. Christianity offered the great Roman slave population the promise of a future life utterly unlike the pain of the present. As a Jewish-based religion, it was pained and self-denialist at a time when Romans wanted to deny. Many were sick of their decadent pantheon of invented gods, the gore of their entertainment, and the orgiastic sexual nature of their many rites. In stark contrast, Christianity simplistically preached love, peace, mutual aid and forgiveness. The Roman intellectuals and political élite laughed at it whilst falling under its spell, and the popularity of Christianity rose at such a furious pace that, by the 3rd century after Christ, it was ready to challenge Mithraism as the dominant Roman religion. In 312 CE, the Emperor Constantine himself had a Christian vision in which he was told that a great military victory would follow if he painted the shields of his men with Christian symbols. This Constantine duly did, and won such a sensational victory that, the following year, he ordered that legislation be put in place for the implementation of Christianity in a role close to that of a state religion.

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[33] Leslie Alcock, *Arthur's Britain*

But the first years of the new religion were chaotic. Although the Mithraic Roman Legions had no intention of adopting Christianity themselves, they were now in the bizarre position of trying to enforce a religion which they themselves did not practise. And though ordered to make a daily prayer to the Christian God, the Legions would afterwards return to their Mithraic lodges. In Rome, Christianity faltered temporarily and was overthrown in 361 CE by the Paganism of the Mithraic emperor known as Julian the Apostate. But when the emperor met an untimely death at war in Persia in 363 CE, the elders of the Christian Church regained power and vowed that usurpers such as Mithras would never again wrestle control from them. And, as Colin Wilson writes, the Christian Church 'proceeded to oppress with an efficiency that Nero would have envied'.[34]

In 391 CE, the Christian Church outlawed the worship of all the gods and goddesses of the Old Religions. In celebration, Bishop Theophilus and his crazed congregation burned down the enormous and ancient Serapeum in Alexandria, in an arson attack of legendary infamy. This violent destruction of a Pagan temple was utterly opposed to the message of peace that had first brought people into the Christian Church, and many churchmen asked that Pagan temples be saved and reconsecrated as Christian centres. In 408 CE, the Edict of Honorius attempted to further reverse the trend of destruction, but the tone of Christianisation had been set, and by 452 CE, the Second Council of Arles declared: '...if in the territory of a bishop infidels light torches or venerate trees, fountains or stones, and he neglects to abolish this usage, he must know that he is guilty of sacrilege.'[35]

The unremitting violence and paranoid intolerance of the Roman Church was largely due to its urban nature. The longer it retained this urban nature, the further it would grow away from true Nature, and many of the early fathers of the Christian Church are quoted as speaking endless misogynistic babblings. St. Jerome poured scorn on Motherhood and said marriage was the equivalent of 'prostituting the members of Christ'.[36] St. Ambrose said that married people ought to have blushed at the state in which they were living.[37] The strange existentialism shown in *The Works of Fastidius* revealed the extent to which the urbanisation of Humanity had already changed people forever. Fastidius the priest declared that true Christians should hate the world and, since it is going to end, they should leave procreation to the Jews, heathens and heretics, advising all Christians to avoid sexual intercourse, for 'having something in common with pigs and dogs is nothing to be particularly proud of'.[38] In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon comments that for early Christians, 'desire was imputed as a crime, and marriage was tolerated as a defect'.

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34 Colin Wilson, *The Occult*

35 Janet & Colin Bord, *Sacred Waters*

36 Avan V. Insole, *Immortal Britain: Epistola xxii, Jerome in Migne*

37 In G. Salmon's *An Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament*, he writes: 'In the literature of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles which issued from the Churches of Asia Minor in the second century, the married life is treated as absolutely unlawful.'

38 & 39 James Wellard, *In Search of Unknown Britain*. In his *Essays in Sex and Civilisation*, Dr Robert Briffault says that society has to constantly blind itself to the fact that its fundamental Christian dogmas on which all of its main tenets are built were made through visions, seizures and 'the survival of what, in their original, few would hesitate to pronounce as being the fanatical ravings of delirious minds'.

Attempts at restoration of the feminine in Keltic Christianity

But most true Christians were appalled at such ramblings and, in the late 4th century, a peaceful reaction to this violent urban Christianity had begun to grow in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Northumbria. This was a far more mystical form of Christianity, and one which had utterly rejected the constant distractions of the city. A young British nobleman named Ninian had undertaken a pilgrimage to Rome in around 385 CE, where he was made bishop by the Pope. But on his way home, Ninian had paid a visit to Martin of Tours, a Christian mystic who had built a monastery in order that people could practise Christianity in the peaceful contemplation that Christ had preached. Ninian was so impressed by Martin of Tours that when he returned home to southern Scotland, he built his own monastery, which soon gained fame across the Keltic world. In the Keltic Church, great emphasis was placed on meditation upon the scriptures and a scrupulous attention was paid to the original Jewish Law. Daily life was approached in a symbolically austere manner, yet the monks were everywhere surrounded by exquisite spiritual works of art. The aims of the mystical Ninian were 'to perceive the eternal word of God reflected in every plant and insect, every bird and animal, and every man and woman'.[39] But the Roman Church was appalled and mystified by the attitudes of the monks, whom they saw as abdicators of responsibility and drop-outs.

And so the British Isles became a stronghold of hermits, monks and holy men. The high priests of the Keltic Church roamed Druid-like around the lands baptising and inspiring by their very existence. But though the Patriarchy had come to Britain, this Keltic Church was really a loose confederation of semi-Pagan magicians and the Roman Church often accused their perceived rivals of being little more than an extension of Druidism.[40] Certainly, magic was performed in the Christianising of the British Isles. It is claimed that St. Patrick, the legendary patron saint of Ireland, brought Christianity into Ireland by defeating the Druids of the High King with uncanny fires which refused to be extinguished. But the Roman Church was grossly unfair when it accused these Keltic Saints of abdicating their responsibility, for walking into the camp of some furious warrior king and converting both him and his Druids to Christianity was more the work of a possessed genius than that of a drop-out.

Nevertheless, the ways of the Keltic Church continued to appall Rome and the position held by women was particularly repugnant to the Patriarchy. In the monasteries, both men and women held authority and mixed communities were quite acceptable. Eventually, marriage between monks and nuns became sanctioned within monastic life and such communities were always overseen by female abbots. Keltic Christianity maintained so many of the ancient festivals, now renamed and rededicated to Christ, that it managed to sustain the life-pulse which kept the people in hope during these dark years. It incorporated Keltic and pre-Keltic art into its Christian designs, and constantly enriched the new teachings with references from the Old Ways. The Keltic Saints were canonised not by the Roman Church, but by the popular acclaim of the local people, who had participated in the life of each one. This meant that both male and female had a place in sainthood, and the tales of saints of both sexes show how well Keltic Christianity understood the need for a drama and a magic that would let the souls of their people fly. For example, the story is told that when the monk Gildas met St. Non, he was struck dumb by her presence. When she gave birth close to an enormous stone, she pushed against it so hard that she left fingerprints in it. During her labours on the stone that place 'shone with so severe a light that it glistened as though the sun was visible and had brought it in front of the clouds'.[41] The child that St. Non gave birth to was the divine St. David, patron saint of Wales.

The Keltic saints were living inspirations whose real lives were so extraordinary that they became credited with supernatural capabilities. We have already seen St. Bridgit turn bathwater into beer,

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40 & 41 **Dana Delap, *Celtic Saints***

while St. Samson raised standing stones by throwing them into place from nearby hills. There are 500 Welsh saints alone, and those such as St. Gwen, St. Fadoc, St. Drillo, St. Elwedd and St. Piro are remembered in the names of Welsh places not because they made great overtures to the Pope in Rome, but because they spread their lives around the local people in such a way that their love could not be forgotten. Cornish villages such as St. Ewe, St. Erth and St. Teach were all communities which had originally sprung up around the work of a local holy man or woman. St. Gastyn was a Breton monk who taught novices and baptised pilgrims in the holy lake of Llangorse in South Wales. The tiny church of Llangasty-Tallyllyn still survives at the water's southern edge, built on the same foundations as the chapel which Gastyn first founded in 450 CE. The historian James Wellard has written that the two factions, Roman and Keltic, 'were as different from each other as a Welsh hermit perched on a rock in the Bristol Channel from an Italian priest officiating at the court of a king'.[42] And though the Roman Church was deeply suspicious of its uncontrolled younger sibling, it had far more pressing problems, for the Roman Empire was crumbling before its eyes.

Barbarian chaos & the Fall of Rome

In the twilight of the Roman Empire, Britain was besieged by the Pagan Saxons, who easily broke the ragged resistance of the Romano-British tribes as they took the eastern half of the country with extreme violence. Mainland Britain's physical intractability had made the island an extremely expensive Roman colony to maintain, requiring four times as many Legions to police it as the entire continent of Africa, an area of land which was twenty times Britain's size! The constant 400-year presence of Roman troops, and their subsequent sudden removal to more needy parts of the Empire, proved psychologically ruinous to the British tribes, who were pushed further and further into the West Country, Cornwall, Wales and Cumbria, until many of them were forced to flee to Brittany and Ireland. Britain was now in a bizarre political and spiritual state in which the Pagan Saxons were mortal enemies of the officially-Christian Britons, themselves still considered to be semi-Pagan by the Roman Church. The 400 years of Roman rule had brought literacy and all the trappings of civilisation, but it had depleted the British tribes of their motivation, and great leaders were found wanting at this critical period. In St. Patrick's time, it had been possible to make the entire 1,000 mile journey to Rome on straight paved roads, but by the end of the 5th century, communications had fallen down so badly that there was no real law & order, no official coinage, not even a recognised government.

Far away in Rome, the Christian Church attempted to explain why marauding Barbarian hordes constantly ransacked the city, for this permanent state of emergency in which the Romans found themselves was rumoured to be a punishment by the non-Christian gods, whose worship had been suppressed at the end of the previous century. Fifth-century Rome was now under permanent siege from such people as the Vandals[43] and the Visigoths, Germanic tribes who were themselves escaping from the invasions of the Huns. And as Rome slipped further into chaos, so the messages of its Church about attitudes towards Paganism became increasingly confused and more likely than ever to reflect the opinions of individual churchmen rather than representing any officially considered policy. All that could now be guaranteed was that every year the Patriarchy would gain just a little more ground in its insidious rise towards total domination. And, in 525 CE, the Roman Church delivered another mighty blow to those who wished to escape Christianity's dominance. The Romans, like many other ancient peoples, had always calculated time in terms of the age of their emperors. In this way, the death of the old chief would always mean a return to Year Zero for the new chief, symbolically reiterating the Wheel of the Year or Circle of Life. But in 525 CE, the monk Dionysius Exigiuus first thought of dating the beginning of time from the incarnation of Jesus Christ.[44] This was a far graver political act than can possibly have been considered at the time, for it knocked the great Circle of Life right out of balance, and started us down the road to modern linear time, with all the ideas of constant progression and improvement which that has come to imply. As we have already learned, Christianity's talk of Armageddon now replaced the Circle of Life with a beginning, a middle and an end. And down the following centuries, it was this implementation of linear time that would help to cause the separation of Humanity from the cycle of the Mother Earth.

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[42] James Wellard, ***In Search of Unknown Britain***

[43] It was the Vandals' sheer exuberance and wanton love of destruction that gave their name to pleasurable destruction.

[44] Leslie Alcock, ***Arthur's Britain***

But though such events were to have endless repercussions for our future world, the chaos of the late 6th century found Paganism thriving in the confusion of these times. It was during this period that the Cornish stone circle of Boskawen-Un[G] first appeared in the *Welsh Triads* as 'Beisgawen', one of the three greatest Bardic sites in Britain. The archaeologist Anna Ritchie has shown that the standing stones of Stenness[G] were still being used for ritual around this time,[45] whilst Drombeg stone circle in southern Ireland has yielded an even later date of 600 CE. The liberal attitudes of certain Keltic bishops added to the pressures on churchmen from their congregation, who had no desire to see their ancient traditions so callously ditched.

In 574 CE, the Christian archbishop Martin of Braga denounced a group of proclaimed new Christians, railing: 'To burn candles at stones and trees and springs, and where three roads meet ... to put bread in a spring, what is that but the worship of the devil? ... And you do all these things after baptism?'[46] In the late 500s, the Council of Auxerre drew up their third canon, which read: 'It is forbidden to discharge vows among woods, or at sacred trees or springs.'[47] Churchmen were beginning to recognise specific ancient rites and modes of behaviour so that they could then legislate against them accordingly. The noose was beginning to tighten around the mystical head of Keltic Christianity, and the Roman Church seized its opportunity to take control of this dangerous British counterpart.

In 597 CE, the enlightened Pope Gregory sent Augustine, Prior of St. Andrew Celianus in Rome and 'a thoroughly urban cleric',[48] to reorder and restyle the ways of the British Church in the manner of the Roman original. Augustine and his party arrived in Kent fearful of their host, the Pagan warlord-king Ethelbert, whose wife Queen Bertha was a Keltic Christian. But the provincial Ethelbert was himself fearful of these urban representatives of mighty Rome and refused to meet Augustine indoors lest he bewitch him. Ironically, whilst the two great men stood quaking in fear of each other, it was Queen Bertha and her Christian daughter Princess Ethelburga who further smoothed the passageway for Christianity...

The circular churchyards – Dark Age relics of the Great Goddess

And so, at the turn of the 7th century, there was a brief enlightenment in Britain which caught the Roman Church in conciliatory mood. In Rome, Pope Gregory vacillated between destruction of the megalithic sites and rededicating them to Jesus Christ, eventually deciding on the latter course of action. Gregory was the Pope who had Christianised Bridgit rather than attempting to eject her from people's worship. He clearly understood the sacred power of these ancient places, and was determined to implement as smooth a shift from Paganism to Roman Christianity as was possible. In a letter to Britain's Archbishop Mellitus in 601 CE, Pope Gregory described the new plan which he wished to adopt, explaining that he and his Church Elders had:

'...come to the conclusion that the temples of the idols ... should on no account be destroyed. The idols are to be destroyed, but the temples themselves should be asperged with holy water, altars set up in them, and relics deposited there... In this way we hope that the people, seeing

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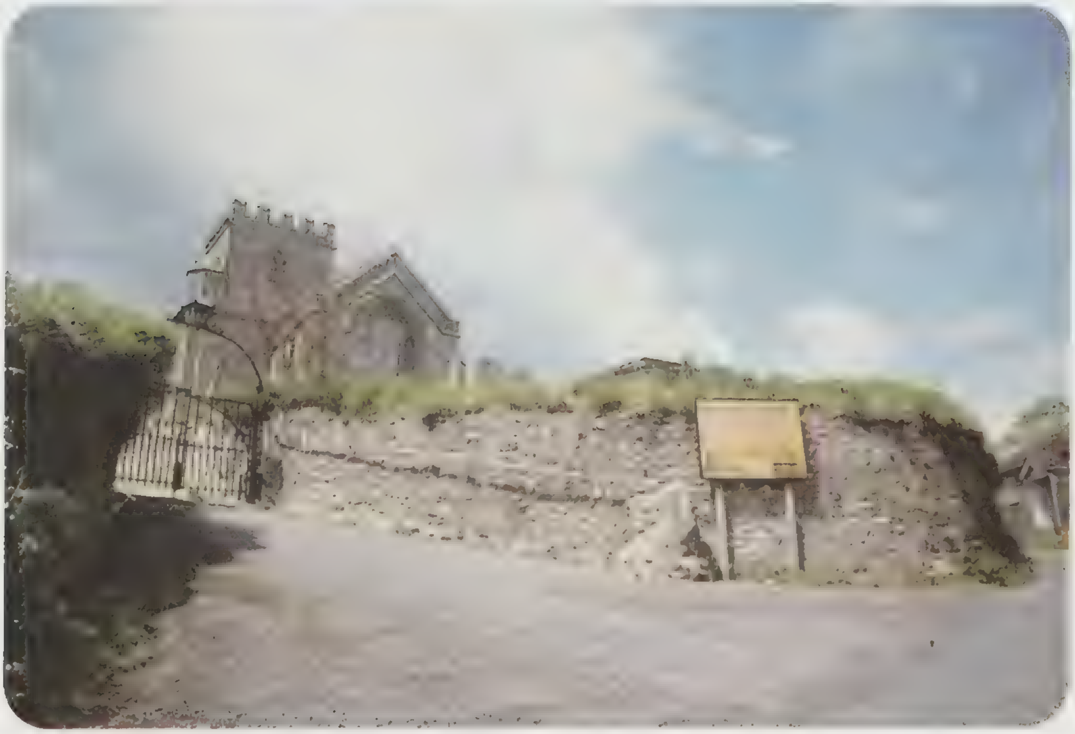
[45] In *The Prehistory of Orkney*, Anna Ritchie wrote: 'In Orkney, in the central area of the henge at the Stone of Stenness, a group of four pits was found (Ritchie 1976); one of the pits contained charcoal from which a radiocarbon date was obtained of AD 519+/-150 was obtained, indicating activity, perhaps of a ritual nature, on the site in the mid-first millennium AD.'

[46] & [47] James Rattue, *The Living Stream*

[48] James Wellard, *In Search of Unknown Britain*



TOP: Efenechtyd circular churchyard in North Wales.
ABOVE: Toller Porcorum circular churchyard. Please note Andrew and Peter, the standing stones discovered when the facing wall of the churchyard fell outwards in the 1980s. One stone is next to the church sign and the other is at the extreme left of the photograph.

their temples are not destroyed, will leave their idolatry and yet continue to frequent the places as formerly, so coming to know and revere the true God.'[49]

The Church authorities devised a plan for the disguising of stone circles. A drystone wall would be built between each standing stone, leaving just enough space for an entrance in one corner. In the centre of the sacred area, a rugged cross would then be erected and it was here that the priest would address his worshippers. In this way, the Pagan peoples would remain in their unroofed temples close to their Great Goddess, their Bronze Age sky gods and all the other deities who had so contributed to their lives. Pope Gregory understood that it would be far easier to arrange Christianity around the existing Paganism than to expect country people to worship happily in an unfamiliar setting.

Unfortunately, Gregory's enlightened dreams proved just another temporary affair and in 609 CE the new Pope, Boniface IV, consecrated the Roman Pantheon to Jesus Christ. But Pope Gregory's words had nevertheless found sympathetic British ears and the rededication of the stone circles here became a successful policy. Eventually, at these modified Pagan sites all over Britain, a small church would be built in place of the original rugged cross, and the standing stones of the original circle would then be pulled out of their walls and replaced with more dry stone. The roofing of the temple, which, it was claimed, allowed the worshipper more time for quiet contemplation, was the final Christian cap, removing forever the relationship of the worshippers with their sensual landscape, their wind, their rain and their skies.

Many of these early circular churchyards still remain in the remote western parts of Britain. The greatest proportion are situated in North Wales at Efenechtyd, Gorsedd, Cilcain, Tremeirchion, Ysbytty Cynfyn and Cerrig-y-Drudion, whilst other examples can be seen at Kilgwrrwg in South Wales and in Toller Porcorum in Dorset. This last church stands on a most obvious former stone circle in the lea of a very fair conical hill. Earlier this century, the rounded northern wall of Toller Porcorum churchyard fell outwards, revealing two standing stones embedded in the remains of 1,400 years of subsequent walls. These stones, now called Andrew and Peter, stand at the entrance to the churchyard. In the centre of Wales, below the magical heights of Plynlimon, the most mysterious of these Christianised Pagan sites remains at Yspytty Cynfyn,[G] tellingly situated in the Rheidol Valley between Devil's Bridge and Ponterwyd, or 'the bridge of the Druid'. In the lea of a spectacular rocky outcrop, the stones of Yspytty Cynfyn punctuate the overgrown mossy walls of the churchyard at a height of about four or five feet, though one giant rises to a confounding eleven feet.

Later on, in further efforts to pull the stubborn, reluctant Keltic tribes into the Christian Church, the 'Llan' system was adopted, in which new churchyards were built which consciously echoed the circular churchyards of Pope Gregory's plan. At first, only the churches built to this new system gained the 'Llan' prefix to their name, but eventually, many of the stone circle-derived churches also adopted it in an effort to obscure the stigma of their Pagan origins. These can still be seen all over North Wales at Llanilltyd, Llandyrog. Llanelidan and, most strongly, at Llanarmon-yn-Ial, where a possible standing stone from the original circle still acts as a gatepost in the farm across the road. The elevated circular churchyard at Llanilltyd, south of Barmouth, stands in what would have been a position of supreme importance, with views all the way down to the wide serpentine river of Afon Mawddeoch. At the back of Llanilltyd church is Kenric's Stone, a possible Bronze Age standing stone with a later 12th-century inscription. This tooled three-and-a-half feet tall menhir was found in 1876 among debris in an outbuilding near the church, and is possibly a remnant of the circle. Unfortunately for the visitor to Llandyrog, a policy of chronic 'improvements' has nowadays rendered the churchyard more square than circular. Llanelidan, too, is frustrating despite its perfect raised position overlooking a river/trackway crossing, for the 'improved' churchyard is again no longer circular, being at best a semi-ring.

Yet most poetically of all, it is generally those circular churchyards which did not kowtow to the 'Llan' prefix which have fared most well. Tremeirchion may have suffered improvement to its circular shape but it stands in extraordinary

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[49] *Ecclesiastical History*, i.30

At Yspytty Cynfyn, in West Wales, this eleven-foot standing stone is now embedded in the circular churchyard wall, along with several smaller neighbours. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (i. 30), St. Gregory wrote: '...the temples of the idols ... should on no account be destroyed. The idols are to be destroyed, but the temples themselves should be asperged with holy water, altars set up in them, and relics deposited there... In this way we hope that the people, seeing their temples are not destroyed, may abandon their error.'

landscape overlooking the river Clwyd floodplain on an ancient trackway which leads to the similarly Christianised Maen Achwyfan,[50] a majestic Bronze Age standing stone. In the mysterious valleys deep in the Clwydian mountains, Cilcain stands Druid-groved and overpoweringly secluded – a Pagan temple to this day. Roman engineers aligned their foul Watling Street at the elevated and remote stone circle known as Cerrig-y-Drudion, overlooking the shallow river valley of the Nant-y-Foel. Then the stone circle was filled in with its drystone walling, and the process was almost complete. Travellers down the modern A5 from both directions are surprised to see the elevated 'Pagan' church of Cerrig-y-Drudion coming towards them as if down the barrel of a gun.

Finally, there is the circular churchyard in the village of Gorsedd, near St. Asaph, which is part of a lost prehistoric centre. The churchyard stands at Druid's Cross, opposite the Druid's Inn, in the northern corner of a great triangle of land bisected on all sides by three ancient roads. The prehistorian Canon Ellis Davies wrote that many standing stones had stood on the site of Gorsedd church until it was built in 1852, at which time the stones were deposited in a hedge.[51] Two of the three stones which were discovered in a hedge at the turn of the 20th century now stand re-erected within the sacred Gorsedd triangle.[52] *Gorsedd* is Welsh for 'throne', and this roughly triangular village once had a great mound at its centre, known dramatically as Y Gorseddau Tumulus, simply 'the great throne'.

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[50] Maen Achwyfan stands at the pentacle crossing at O.S. 116.129788. The standing stone is a smooth-faced stone carved with a rounded shoulderless Wotan Cross.

This is the last of the circular churchyards to be explored here in the text, but it is the most pertinent example of how detecting Christian paranoia can lead us not only to the discovery of ancient stone circles, but of whole lost Pagan complexes. Pope Gregory's policy of Christianising Pagan sites did not last forever, but was long enough to give the people of the Old Religion some time to camouflage their sacred centres. Whereas many dolmens and burial chambers were simply cleared away, at least a circular churchyard still remained in its true sacred place and the stones of the Great Goddess formed the foundations of the entire monument.

664 CE - The Synod of Whitby

But time was running out for the Keltic Church and in 627 CE, even Coifi, the Pagan high priest of Northumbria, converted to Christianity. With the intolerance of most born-agains, he took his party of retainers to the great temple of Woden at Goodmanham, east of York, where he told them: 'Set fire to the temple and its enclosures and destroy them.'[53] In 655 CE, the Edict of Nantes insisted that 'Bishops and their servants … dig up and remove and hide where they cannot be found those stones which in remote and woody places are still worshipped and where vows are still made.'[54]

The great battle which had been brewing for centuries between the Roman and Keltic Churches now manifested in one gigantic fundamental dispute over the celebration of Easter. In accordance with their scrupulous adherence to the Jewish Law, the Keltic Church had always held Easter on the day of Passover. Unfortunately, the Roman Church considered Easter to be a moveable feast, and one which had to be calculated according to the day following the full moon after the vernal equinox. This protracted method of calculation had first been conceived at the ancient Council of Nicaea and was utterly fundamental to the Roman Church. Unfortunately, the calculation had so irritated the Keltic Church that they had constantly refused to implement it, arguing their case successfully at each successive religious synod but knowing that the aggressive Roman Church would inevitably return next time with the same old question.

The turning point for both Churches finally took place at the Synod of Whitby in 664 CE. Speaking on behalf of the Keltic Church, the Irish bishop Colman of Lindisfarne offered his traditional arguments in favour of maintaining the Jewish date for Easter. But he was strongly challenged by the smooth tongue of Wilfrid, Bishop of York, who insisted that the Keltic Church take on the same Easter date as Rome. Wilfrid was part of a new breed of aristocratic and sophisticated priest and, as abbot of Ripon Abbey, in Yorkshire, he had introduced Roman rules wherever he dared. On the floor of the ecclesiastical court at the Synod of Whitby, Wilfrid now used Christian Fundamental arguments of such sophistry that, were they to be printed here, only a glazed look of mystification would come over the reader.[55] Such was the state of the Patriarchy now that the much-respected Bishop Colman was forced to back down or face squirming as a heretic in the face of Wilfrid's sabre-sharp intellect. The judge throughout these extraordinarily unbalanced proceedings was the Saxon King Oswy, a Roman apologist of considerable proportions.[56] And Wilfrid, Bishop of York, was the protégé of Oswy's wife, Queen Eanfled, who had paid for his education in Rome.

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[51] Canon Ellis Davies, *The Prehistoric and Roman Remains of Flintshire*

[52] The A515 is an ancient pathway which passes the Gop in the west. Yet, within yards at Gorsedd, the road quickly goes from A-road to local road to a driveway to the Cedars. Thereafter, it continues as a pathway to a field boundary and then back to the local road. As I turned north at the road, I saw a small four-foot standing stone in the garden of a bungalow at O.S. 117.153763. I continued to write some notes in the churchyard and walked past Pottle's Premier Plants, just south of the Druid's Inn, and was astonished to see another standing stone. I talked to Mark Pottle (thirty-two) who told me that he was responsible for erecting the stone along with his father Keith, ten years ago.

[53] & [54] *Ecclesiastical History*, ii.14

[55] Jakob Streit, *Sun and Cross*

At the end of the proceedings, King Oswy promptly found in favour of Wilfrid, and the independent British Church finally fell into the hands of Rome. Never again would saints be canonised by popular acclaim, for in Rome's totalitarian state such things could happen only by Papal decree. The mystical free-spirited aspects of Keltic Christianity, which had for so long been allowed to remain a part of daily ritual, were now replaced by the worldly piety and corporate thinking of Roman worship. On this day, the fate of the countryside was sealed and remaining Pagan sites such as holy wells, sacred groves, stone circles and other rough stone monuments, would have to face head-on the growing intolerance of an increasingly moralithic Christianity. For the urban religion had finally won the day, and Time's great circle was now eternally broken, destined to run forever in linear form down an ever-increasingly inclined plane towards that which we call Progress!

Gone

And so the Great Goddess slipped the ties which had, seemingly forever, bound her to her people. Where she was forgotten she was utterly forgotten, and where she was remembered, the Church demonised her, choosing to remember only her apparently negative aspects such as the Destroyer and the Old Hag. Her megalithic sites in their heavenly surroundings were designated works of the Devil, and such places were to be avoided at all costs. Humanity's millennia-long love affair with the Mother Earth fell further and further as the Roman Church actively preached 'dominion over the land'. And it was during this time that words even associated with the Great Goddess became outlawed and despicable. We have earlier seen the roots of the Goddess Koeur in 'cunt', from the Welsh *cened* and the Latin *cunni*. But even the comparatively innocuous 'cunning' came to be tarnished because of its etymological association, whilst the male penis as 'prick' became an unutterable slang word because of its roots in Bridgit as Brig. All over Britain, the demonisation of the Great Goddess caused such megalithic nicknames as the Devil's Den,[G] the Devil's Chair in Avebury,[G] the Devil's Arrows, and the Devil's Punchbowl near Wantage. Over the next 1,400 years, constant Papal dispensations would pursue the Great Goddess until she appeared no more than an ancient sub-basement in the glitzy condominium of modern culture. How curious it is, then, to explore that basement and discover fabrics that still furnish the modern penthouse suite.

So now, when people ask you 'Who precisely was the Great Goddess?', please tell them that the central core of our first culture was not some unseen sky god. Tell them that it was only many thousands of years later that his Patriarchy was overlaid upon her iceberg-deep foundations. Say that it was to the Great Goddess that all our stone monuments were originally dedicated, and that it is she who still permeates our language, our place-names; indeed, we each of us still unconsciously invoke the names of the Great Goddess every hour of our modern-day lives. For, like the mythical Arthur, she has never truly departed. Though out of sight and uncelebrated for millennia, the Great Goddess was too fundamental to culture to ever truly die. To call her name is to reawaken her. Indeed, to invoke her spirit *now* on Britain's most ancient sacred landscapes would be to restart the cult of the Great Goddess from its pre-metal form. She has never truly died, nor could she ever completely leave us. Let us now reawaken the Great Goddess from this nameless prison by calling out to her in the landscape and chanting at her stones.

For she is the Great Goddess.
And in her many splendid aspects she Lives!

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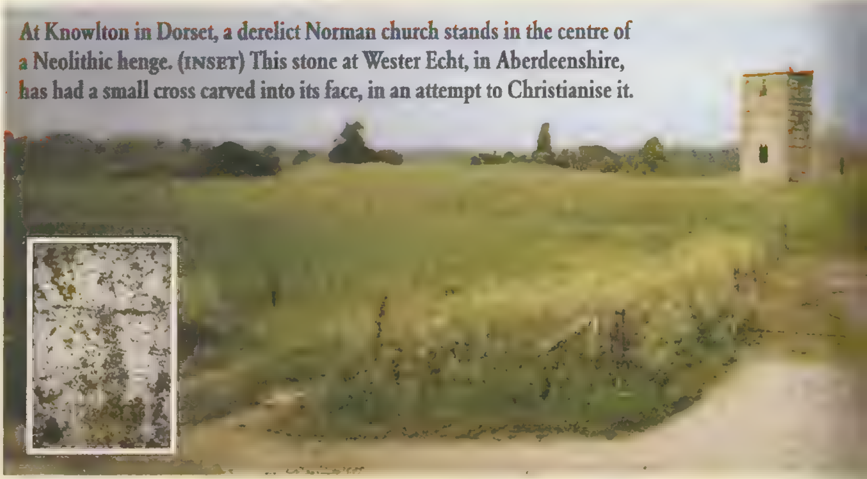
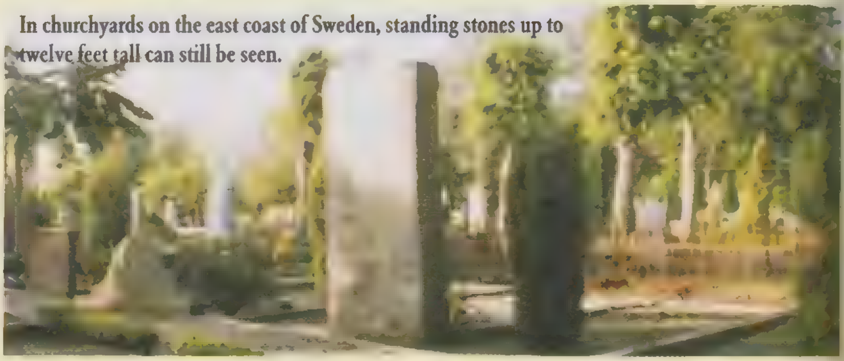
[56] **Jakob Streit, *Sun and Cross***

A standing stone in a Swedish churchyard.

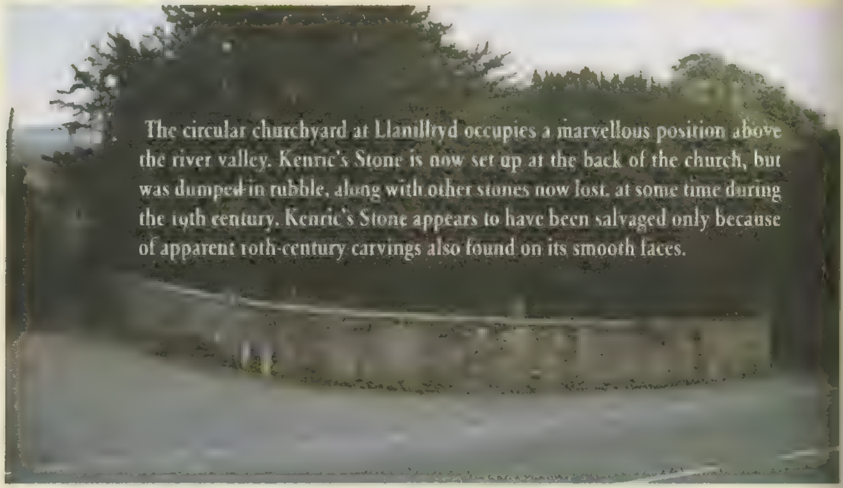


At Knowlton in Dorset, a derelict Norman church stands in the centre of a Neolithic henge. (INSET) This stone at Wester Echt, in Aberdeenshire, has had a small cross carved into its face, in an attempt to Christianise it.



In churchyards on the east coast of Sweden, standing stones up to twelve feet tall can still be seen.

Kenric's Stone.

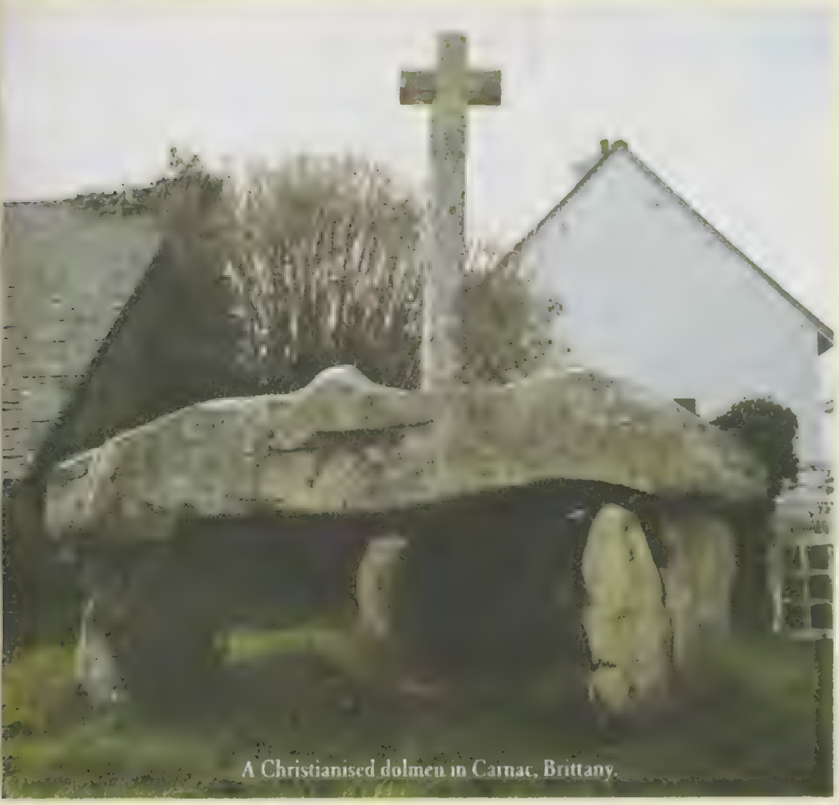


The circular churchyard at Llanillryd occupies a marvellous position above the river valley. Kenric's Stone is now set up at the back of the church, but was dumped in rubble, along with other stones now lost, at some time during the 19th century. Kenric's Stone appears to have been salvaged only because of apparent 10th-century carvings also found on its smooth faces.

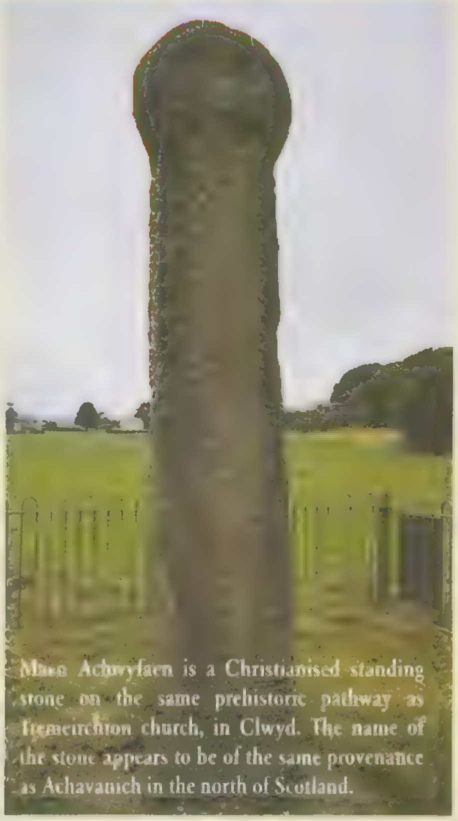
Tremeirchion.

[illegible] church is a mystical place with a damp mysterious atmosphere. It stands at the end of a long alignment of North Wales sites (see photo left). Despite its position beside a prehistoric trackway, Tremeirchion church has suffered considerable modernisation. But the views across the floodplain of the river Clwyd are magnificent.

The Four Stones of Gwytherin stand on a natural mound, which appears to have been levelled and prepared. The church was built very close up to the stones.



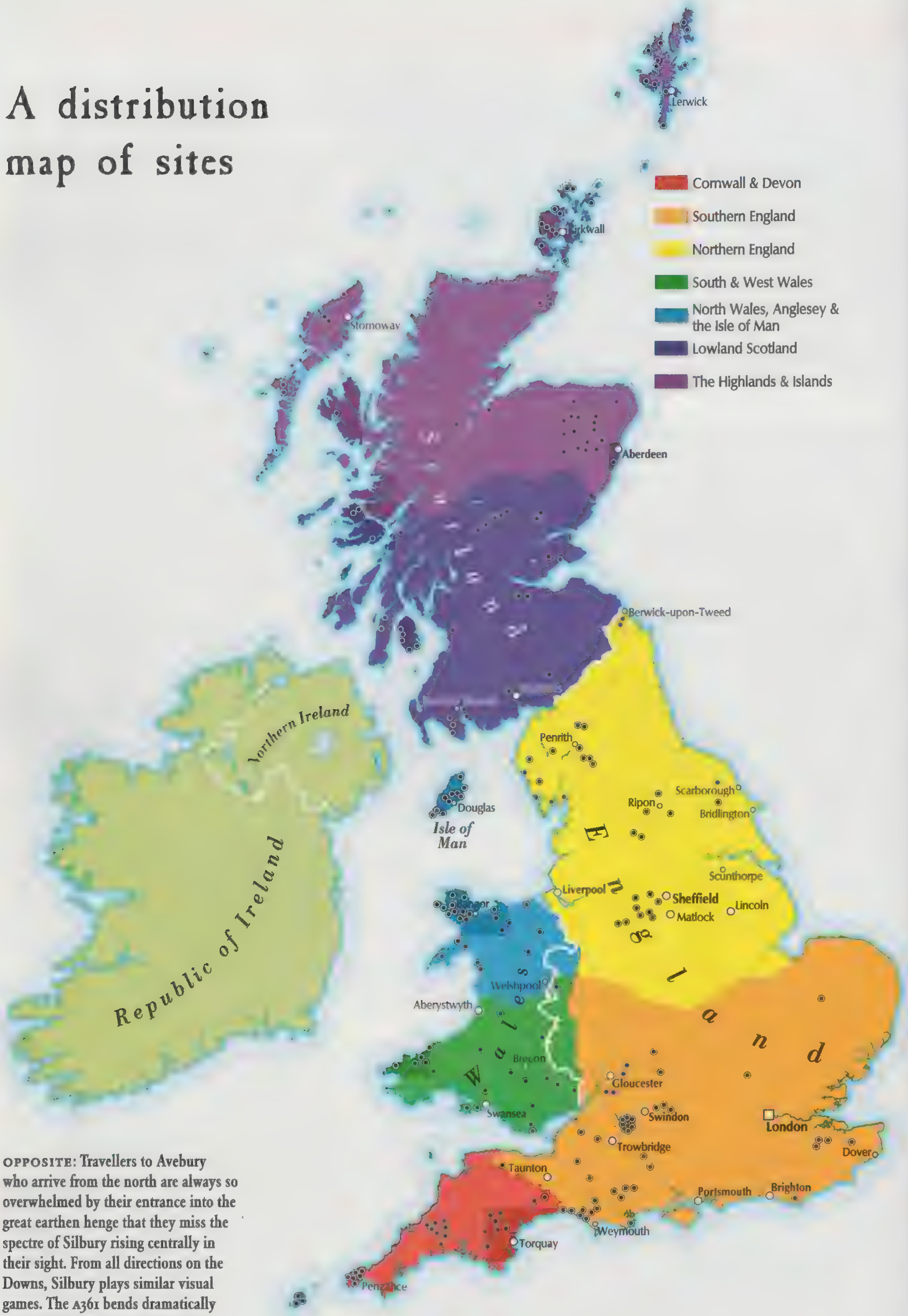
A Christianised dolmen in Carnac, Brittany.



Maen Achwyfaen is a Christianised standing stone on the same prehistoric pathway as Tremeirchion church, in Clwyd. The name of the stone appears to be of the same provenance as Achavanich in the north of Scotland.

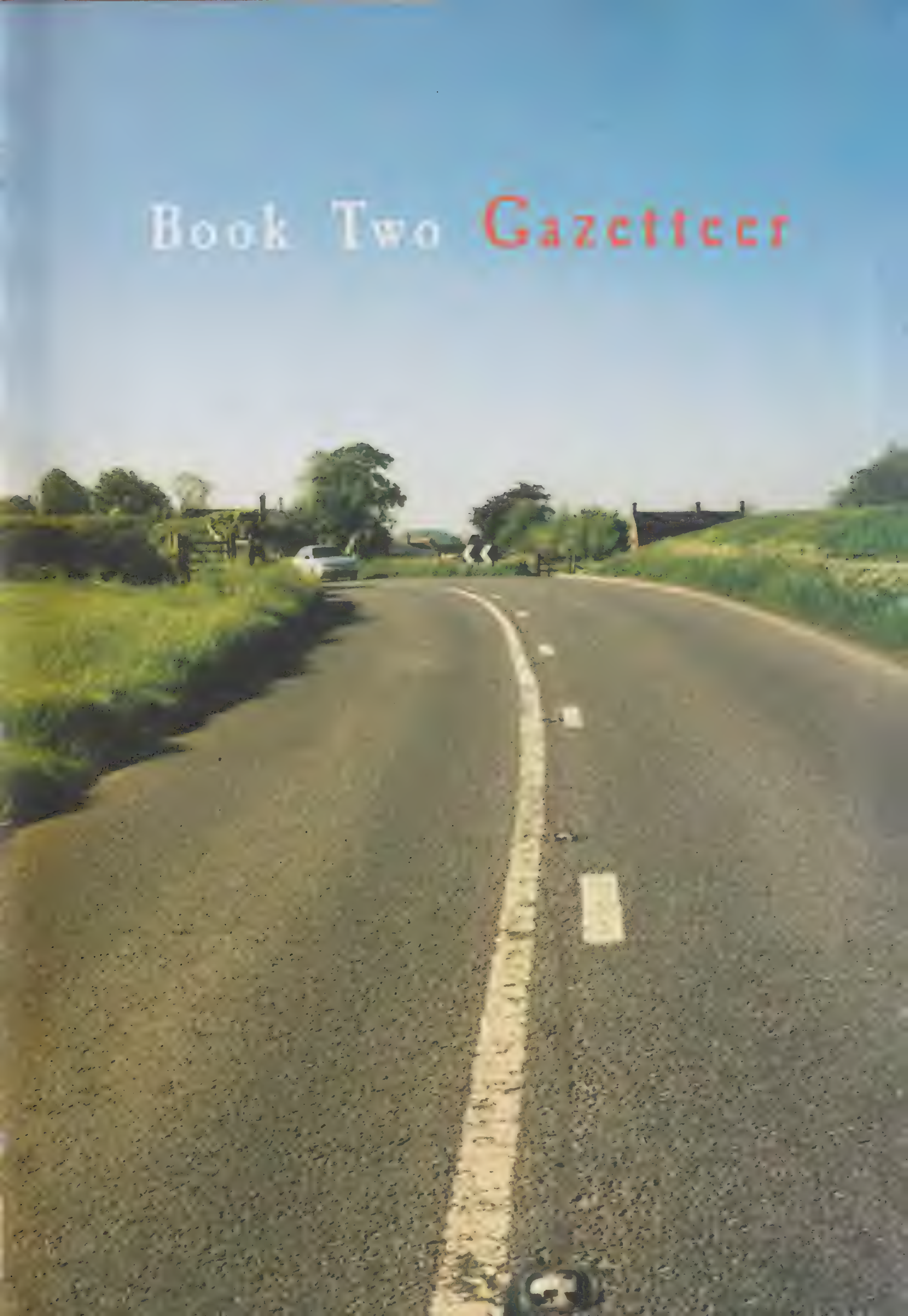
The churchyard at Llanarmon-yn-Ial, North Wales.

A distribution map of sites


🟥 Cornwall & Devon
Southern England
Northern England
🟩 South & West Wales
North Wales, Anglesey & the Isle of Man
Lowland Scotland
The Highlands & Islands
Lerwick
Kirkwall
Stornoway
Aberdeen
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Northern Ireland
Republic of Ireland
Douglas
Isle of Man
Penrith
Scarborough
Ripon
Bridlington
England
Scunthorpe
Liverpool
Sheffield
Matlock
Lincoln
Bangor
Welshpool
Aberystwyth
Wales
Brecon
Gloucester
Swindon
London
Swansea
Trowbridge
Dover
Taunton
Portsmouth
Brighton
Weymouth
Torquay
Penzance

OPPOSITE: Travellers to Avebury who arrive from the north are always so overwhelmed by their entrance into the great earthen henge that they miss the spectre of Silbury rising centrally in their sight. From all directions on the Downs, Silbury plays similar visual games. The A361 bends dramatically on entering Avebury, similar to the southern West Kennett Avenue. Does this give this stretch of the A361 a possible Neolithic provenance?

Book Two Gazetteer



HOW TO BEHAVE IN THE COUNTRY

Many of these megalithic sites are situated on private land or on farms. This does not mean that the farmers/landowners have no idea how much you want to see their stones, as locals guides and pamphlets will have sent a steady stream of visitors to their doors down the years. But certain behaviour will add to your welcome and, perhaps more importantly, to that of those who come after you. Here are some points to remember:

Always ask permission and park sensibly if you are in a car.

Don't proffer this book as though it were some magical entrance pass – this could irritate.

Shut all gates and avoid disturbing the animals.

Try to leave with more rubbish than you arrived with (I always carry a crinkly carrier bag in my sock) and don't exempt your own habits from this rule (butts, sweet papers, foil, tea bags, you name it).

Don't presume that everyone loves your freeform didgeridoo and blaster (and always hold shamanic experiments at non-gazetteer sites!).

Respect the sacredness of these temples and the land on which they stand.

GENERAL MAPS

There are no easy ways to many of these sites. Indeed, such is their sacredness and enormous antiquity that it would be immoral for them to be signposted or treated like official heritage sites. In any case, many are on farms, so this would be so inconveniencing to the farmer that he would restrict access immediately. The maps here will help you, but they will not guarantee that you will get there. Get a good road atlas and use it in tandem with the maps in the book. That will get you to most of the sites. Unfortunately, there are those more obscurely placed sites which require the use of an O.S. map. If you think this is a waste of money or difficult to understand, begin by buying number 203 for the Land's End, number 173 for the Avebury area, number 55 for the Kilmartin Valley, or numbers 37 and 38 for the Aberdeenshire area. Each of these maps will deluge you with sites and information, and whole holidays will be planned around one £4.25 Ordnance Survey map (current '98).

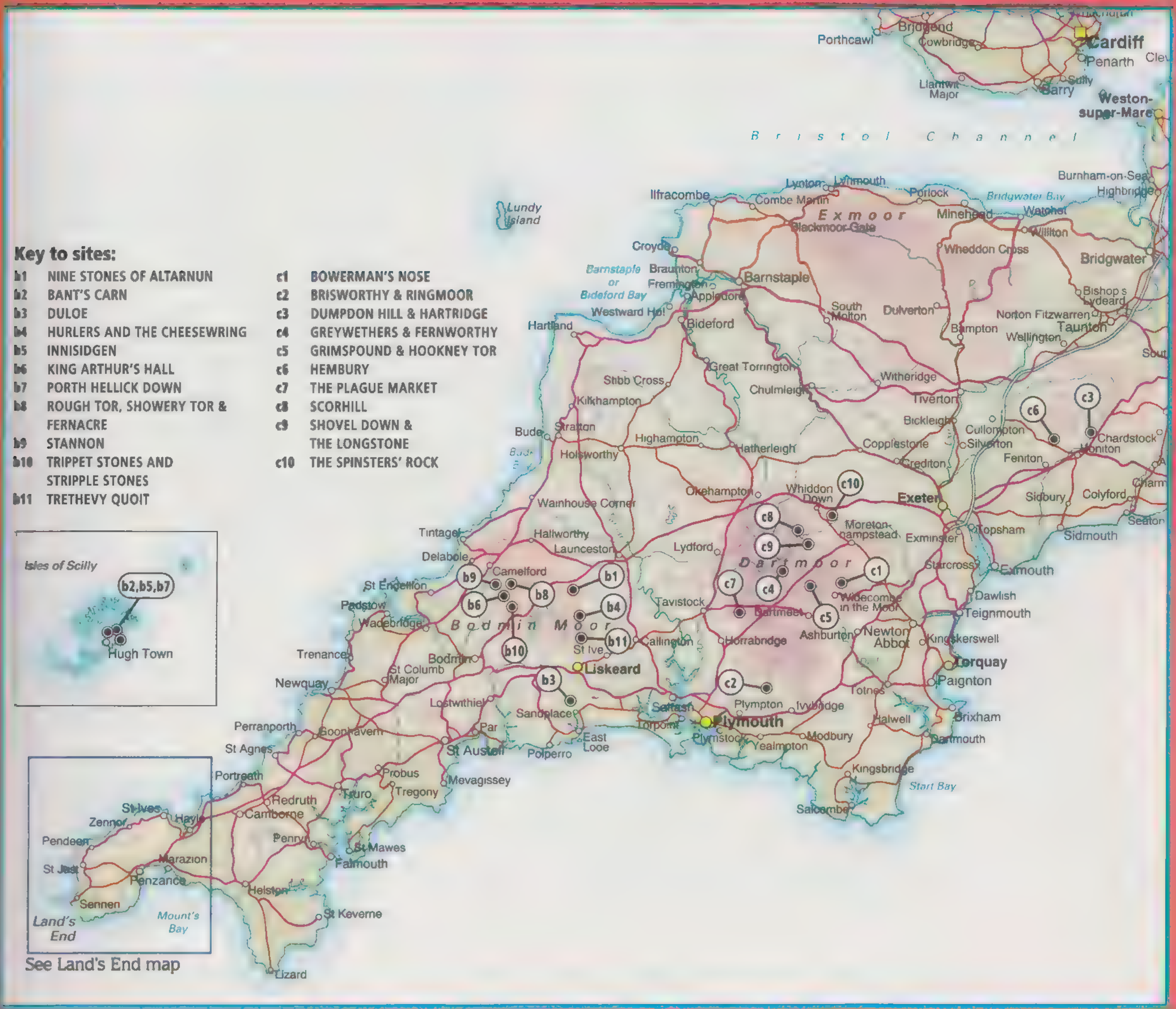
THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

All map references begin with a three-number prefix (e.g. 116.126466). This number belongs to the Ordnance Survey Landranger series, which has proved to have been the most useful, economical and simple to use for these travels. However, the general six-figure number (e.g. 116.126466) is of use on all O.S. maps and can be applied to all O.S. maps, old or new. Because they cover much wider acreage, certain sacred hills and camps will occasionally get this more general kind of four-figure reference, e.g.: O.S. 116.23.35.

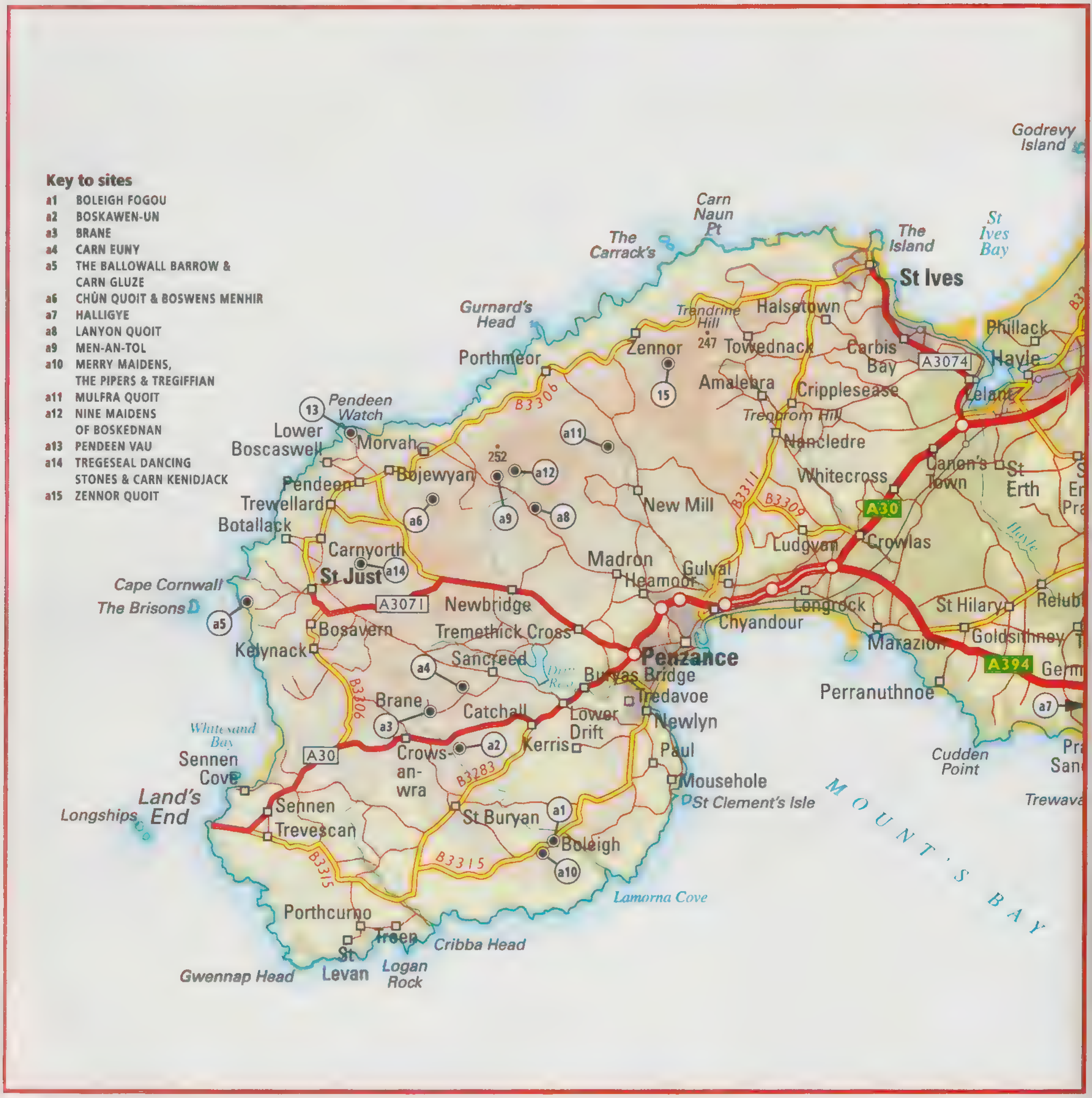
[illegible]

one

Cornwall & Devon


Key to sites:
b1 NINE STONES OF ALTARNUN
b2 BANT'S CARN
b3 DULOE
b4 HURLERS AND THE CHEESEWRING
b5 INNISIDGEN
b6 KING ARTHUR'S HALL
b7 PORTH HELLICK DOWN
b8 ROUGH TOR, SHOWERY TOR & FERNACRE
b9 STANNON
b10 TRIPPET STONES AND STRIPPLE STONES
b11 TRETHEVY QUOIT
c1 BOWERMAN'S NOSE
c2 BRISWORTHY & RINGMOOR
c3 DUMPDON HILL & HARTRIDGE
c4 GREYWETHERS & FERNWORTHY
c5 GRIMSPOUND & HOOKNEY TOR
c6 HEMBURY
c7 THE PLAGUE MARKET
c8 SCORHILL
c9 SHOVEL DOWN & THE LONGSTONE
c10 THE SPINSTERS' ROCK
Bristol Channel
Lundy Island
Porthcawl
Bridgend
Cowbridge
Cardiff
Penarth
Llantwit Major
Barry
Sully
Weston-super-Mare
Burnham-on-Sea
Highbridge
Bridgwater Bay
Bridgwater
Ilfracombe
Lynton
Lynmouth
Combe Martin
Porlock
Minehead
Watchet
Williton
Exmoor
Blackmoor Gate
Wheddon Cross
Croyde
Braunton
Barnstaple or Bideford Bay
Fremington
Barnstaple
Appledore
Westward Ho!
Bideford
South Molton
Dulverton
Bishop's Lydeard
Norton Fitzwarren
Taunton
Bampton
Wellington
Hartland
Great Torrington
Stibb Cross
Kilkhampton
Chulmleigh
Witheridge
Tiverton
Bickleigh
Cullompton
Silverton
Bude
Stratton
Holsworthy
Highampton
Hatherleigh
Copplestone
Crediton
Feniton
Honiton
Chardstock
Okehampton
Whiddon Down
Exeter
Wainhouse Corner
Moretonhampstead
Exminster
Topsham
Sidbury
Colyford
Seaton
Sidmouth
Tintagel
Delabole
Hallworthy
Launceston
Lydford
Dartmoor
Starcross
Exmouth
Camelford
St Endellion
Padstow
Wadebridge
Bodmin Moor
Tavistock
Widecombe in the Moor
Dawlish
Teignmouth
Bartmeet
Ashburton
Newton Abbot
Kingskerswell
Callington
Horrabridge
St Ive
Trenance
Bodmin
Liskeard
Torquay
Paignton
Newquay
St Columb Major
Totnes
Plympton
Ivybridge
Lostwithiel
Sandplace
Saltash
Torpoint
Plymouth
Plymstock
Yealmpton
Modbury
Halwell
Brixham
Dartmouth
Perranporth
Goonhavern
Par
St Austell
East Looe
Polperro
St Agnes
Kingsbridge
Start Bay
Salcombe
Portreath
Probus
Mevagissey
Redruth
Truro
Tregony
Camborne
St Ives
Zennor
Hayle
Pendeen
Penryn
St Mawes
Falmouth
St Just
Marazion
Penzance
Helston
Sennen
Land's End
Mount's Bay
St Keverne
Lizard
See Land's End map
Isles of Scilly
Hugh Town

Land's End Peninsula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a3 BRANE
a4 CARN EUNY
a5 THE BALLOWALL BARROW & CARN GLUZE
a6 CHÛN QUOIT & BOSWENS MENHIR
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a9 MEN-AN-TOL
a10 MERRY MAIDENS, THE PIPERS & TREGIFFIAN
a11 MULFRA QUOIT
a12 NINE MAIDENS OF BOSKEDNAN
a13 PENDEEN VAU
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A30
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Hayle
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St Just
Madron
Heamoor
Gulval
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A3071
Newbridge
Longrock
St Hilary
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Tremethick Cross
Marazion
Goldsithney
Kelynack
Sancreed
Drift Res.
Penzance
A394
Buryas Bridge
B3306
Brane
Tredavoe
Perranuthnoe
Catchall
Lower Drift
Newlyn
Whitesand Bay
Sennen Cove
A30
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Kerris
Paul
Cudden Point
B3283
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Longships
St Clement's Isle
MOUNT'S BAY
Sennen
St Buryan
Trevescan
Boleigh
B3315
B3315
Lamorna Cove
Porthcurno
Treen
Cribba Head
St Levan
Gwennap Head
Logan Rock
13
15
a1
a2
a3
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a14

Boleigh Fogou

Pronounced 'Bo-lay foogoo'. Boleigh is the most genteel of all the four remaining Cornish fogous, the late Iron Age ritual holes which were used into the Dark Ages. The monument is situated on a wooded hill, once part of an Iron Age settlement but now the garden of a large 1920s house. This is the home of Jo May, the head of CAER, a New Age group which holds rebirthing ceremonies in the fogou. The fogou is a simple structure tunnelling straight into the hillside, and there is a creep passage to the left which is accessible only through a tiny lintelled entranceway, after which the creep curls back on itself in a typically disorientating manner. In Robert Hunt's Christmas story *Duffy & the Devil*, he tells of Squire Lovel of nearby Trewoofe (pronounced 'Trove') who met a great party of witches at the Boleigh fogou:

'The squire had left his home at daybreak to hunt hares all day but although he had been unsuccessful he was determined to bring home a couple even if it meant hunting all night long. At nightfall he recounted how "as we passed the Dawnse Main [the Merry Maidens stone circle] up started a hare, as fine a hare as ever was seen. She passed the Pipers [the Merry Maidens' two huge outliers] down through the Reens, in the mouth of the dogs half the time yet they couldn't catch her at all. As fine a chase as ever was seen, until she took into the Fugoe Hole. In went the dogs after her, and I followed, the owls and bats flying around my head. On we went through water and mud, more than a mile I'm quite certain. I didn't know the place was so long before. At last we came to a broad pool of water, when the dogs lost the scent and came running back past me howling and jowling, terrified almost to death! A little further on I turned around a corner, and saw a glimmering fire on the other side of the water, and there were St. Levan witches in scores. Some were riding on ragwort, some on brooms, some were floating on their three-legged stools, and some, who had been milking the little good cows in Wales, had come back astride of the largest leeks they could find." The witches gathered around the fire and caused it to burn up in a brilliant blue flame by blowing after a strange fashion. The squire saw a peculiar little man in black with a forked tail which he held high in the air and twirled around. The whole assembly began to dance like the wind, going faster and faster. After the dance all the witches made a ring around the fire and blew it up again until the blue flames reached the top of the cavernous gorge. The devil danced in and out of the fire while soundly kicking the surrounding witches. "At last – I was shaking with laughter at the fun – I shouted, 'Go to it, Old Nick!' and, lo, the lights went out, and I had to fly with all my speed, for every one of the witches was after me. I scampered home somehow, and here I am." '

CANDLELIGHT NOTES FROM THE CREEP, BOLEIGH FOGOU, ROSEMERRYN HOUSE, OUTSIDE PENZANCE: 27TH MARCH 1992 CE

There's soil all over my book. I lay and tripped out here for a while but now I'm fresh, comfortable and happy to write. Boleigh fogou is set in exquisite surroundings in the grounds of a house run by people who hold 'events' in the fogou. That in itself gives this underground passage a strong feeling of life and, quite unlike Pendeen Vau,[G] it is possible to walk with dignity at a low stoop to Boleigh fogou rather than the scramble/lowering affair in the farmyard at Pendeen. I'm sitting in the creep right in the furthest corner beyond the strange recumbent rock and I can hear ducks quacking in the peace outside. The entrance to the creep is a tiny affair, with an inverted entrance like a post-box about one-and-a-half feet by two-and-a-half feet high…[These gibbering notes have been here included to give at least some of the flavour of these sacred sites when their powers show-out for the visitor.]

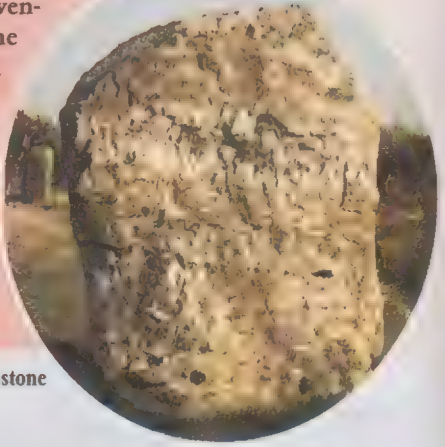
Take the B3315 Penzance–Land's End road to the farm at the crook in the road, where the two enormous Pipers standing stones rear up. The Boleigh entrance is the first past the farm entrance on the Penzance side.

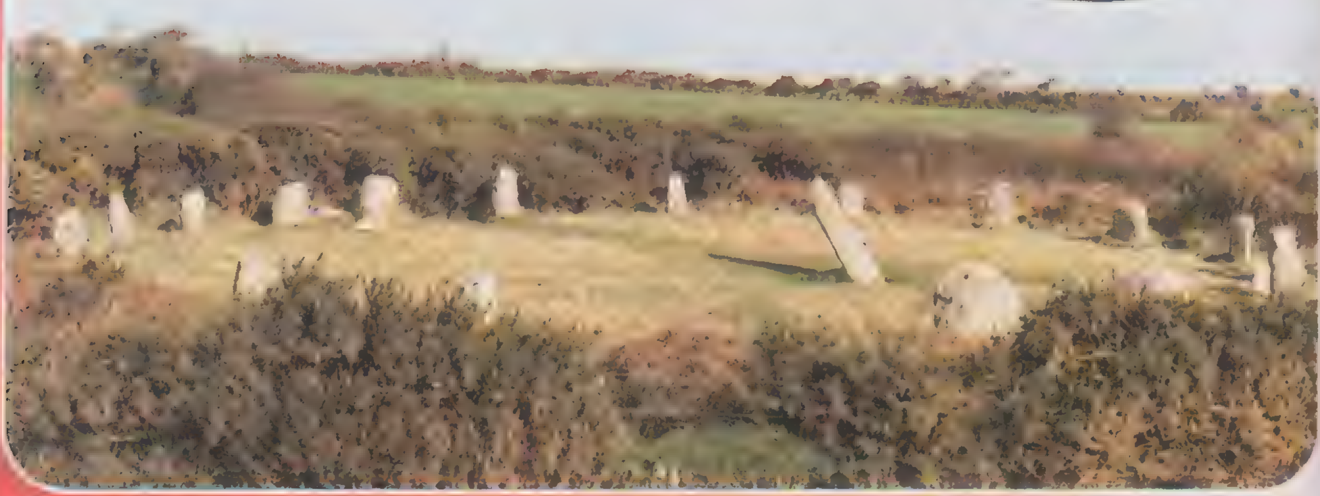
1 a) 2

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.412274

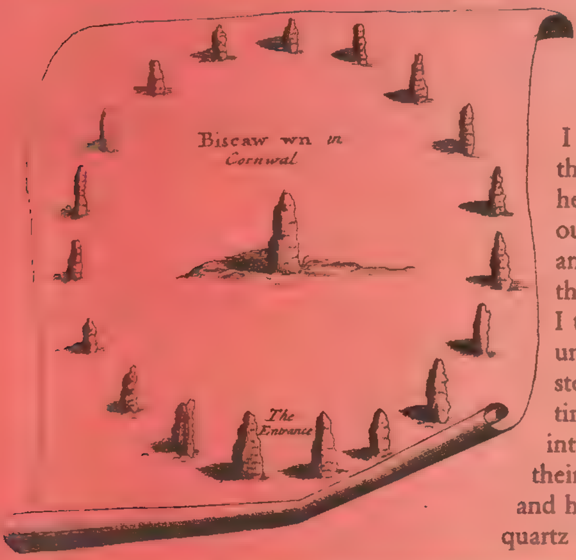
Boskawen-Un

Of all the great Cornish circles, Boskawen-Un is far & away the most formidable in terms of legend, history and atmosphere. The large granite circle stands surrounded by a thick forest of gorse, at times impassable. In the circle's centre is a beautiful leaning seven-foot pillar, a sun-dial seemingly ready to crash to the ground at any moment. The circle's westernmost stone is a cunningly placed block of white quartz. On dull days, this stone merges perfectly with the other bulky uprights, but seen from the leaning centre stone on a clear day, the sun hangs over the white quartz pillar, which shines remarkably. The circle once had many outlying stones, but these have all been recently removed. Boskawen-Un is situated far from the road down a thickly overgrown gorse pathway, only 600 yards long but still an arduous trek in the wrong weather. The modern Cornish Gorsedd hold their rituals there, though similar rites have been described at Boskawen-Un since the 7th century after Jesus Christ.





INSET: The quartz stone



NOTES FROM BOSKAWEN-UN STONE CIRCLE, NEAR PENZANCE, CORNWALL: MID-AFTERNOON 24TH MARCH 1992 CE

I crossed out the first lines of this entry because of the ridiculous feeling that the stone would fall and crush my legs. This is an earth temple to the heavens. Lie with your feet at the base of the pillar and your head looking outwards, your back arched into the ground so that your neck is arched and angled into the ground. Your eyeline then skims across ground and the stones are in view. The whole place is magical beyond belief… When I tried to take the definitive photograph a half hour ago, the wind was uncooperative whilst I hauled my stepladder onto the hedge wall. As I stood in that precarious position, the wind felt as though it could at any time push me over, one way ten feet onto the field, the other way ten feet into the thorns and bushes. I was quick and I thanked the elements for their co-operation. Before I arrived, I was upset and tired. Now I am warm and happy and Dorian has just arrived. She went very naturally to the only quartz pillar of the nineteen granite stones still upright in the circle.

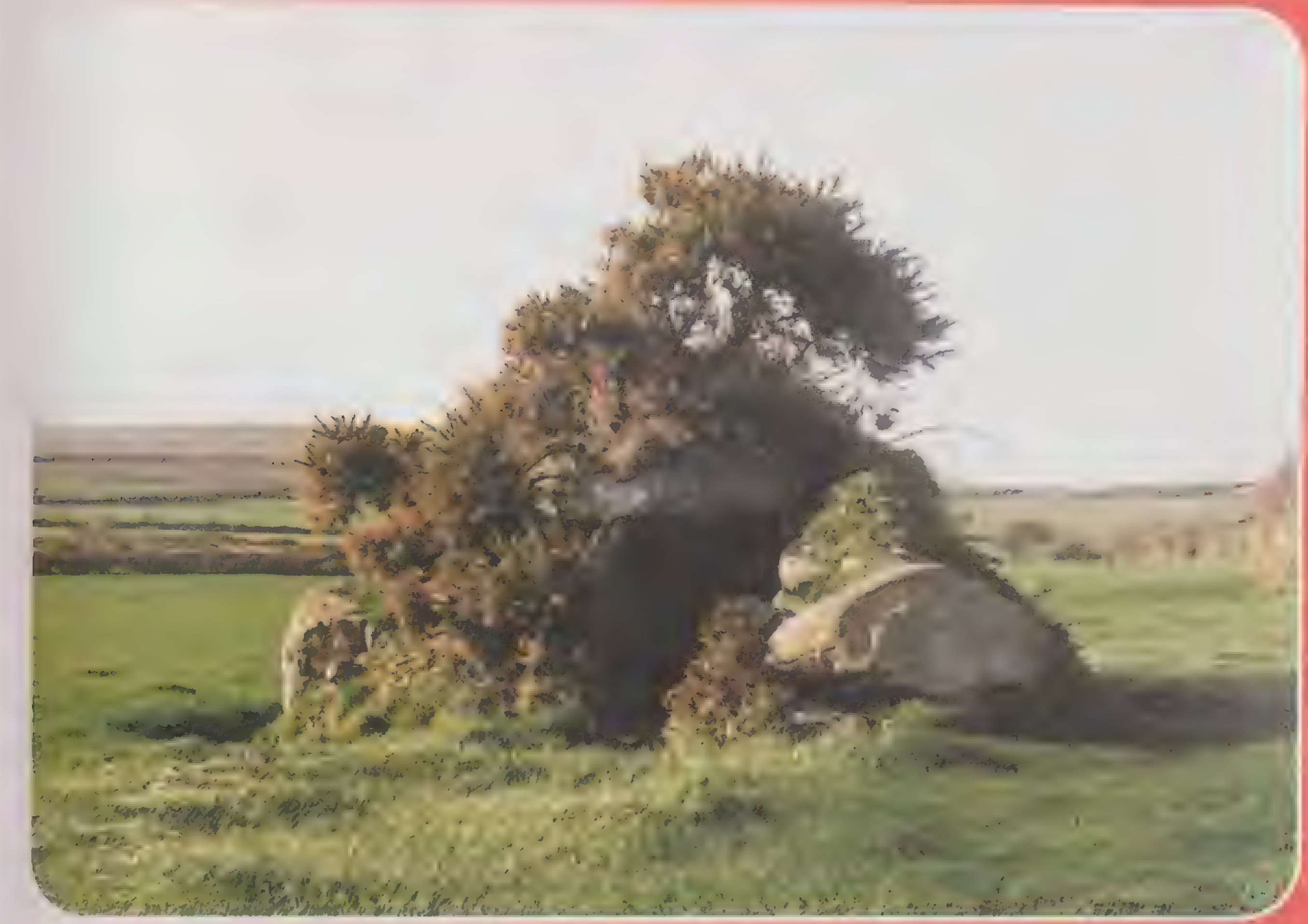
On the A30 from Penzance, pass a mile out of Catchall before looking for Boskawen-Noon farm, or continue a further half mile to an obscure stile at the top of the hill, on the left. Walk through deep vegetation for 600 yards.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.402282

1 a) 3

Brane

Standing alone in a low-lying field on Brane farm, this funny-looking place is the best example of a Scillonian tomb on the whole peninsula. Its single chamber was used for years as a sheep-shelter, and a gorse bush grows out of its roof, giving an appearance of cartoon comedy. There are other examples of such monuments at Pennance, Treen and Tregiffian, which are all curiosities but more dilapidated. But here in this arable land, two fields away from the nearest minor road, and overlooked by the sacred hill of Bridgit – 'the first & last Hill' of Carn Brea – it is Brane's solitariness which makes this site such an ideal pilgrimage. *Longbarrow Note* – In the furthest corner of the field in which Brane stands is a strange rise in the land. Craig Weatherhill suggests that this is the remains of the only longbarrow yet discovered on the Penwith peninsula.



NOTES FROM THE CHAMBER OF BRANE ENTRANCE GRAVE, BRANE, CORNWALL: AFTERNOON, 23RD MARCH 1992 CE

Looking out of this crazy megalithic hut onto wild longhair grass in this field, I am smiling and bewildered. This little tomb is a strange home of the little people. The wind whistles around this structure but ain't nothing gonna touch it 'cept the gods. Some writer said in an interview recently that he would not be interested in God even if someone proved he existed. That poor intellectual fool – all around me I see God, Goddess, the real and righteous thing. And here in this funny little tomb I see real joy of life. Man stays around when his greater glory is second to the gods. And this tiny pimple on this field is recognition of man saying 'thanks'. I could only compare this Brane grave with the cromlech of St. Lythans[G] and the Devil's Den.[G] Although both are dilapidated and would have had a much longer and more impressive mound, they now all three have an excellent humour – the solitary placement, the crouched quality and the fact that all three are in situations so unlikely as to have allowed a burial chamber to have lasted over 4,500 years…

The village of Brane is marked on road atlases, two miles SW of Sancreed. Drive there and ask permission at Brane farm at the heart of this tiny village.

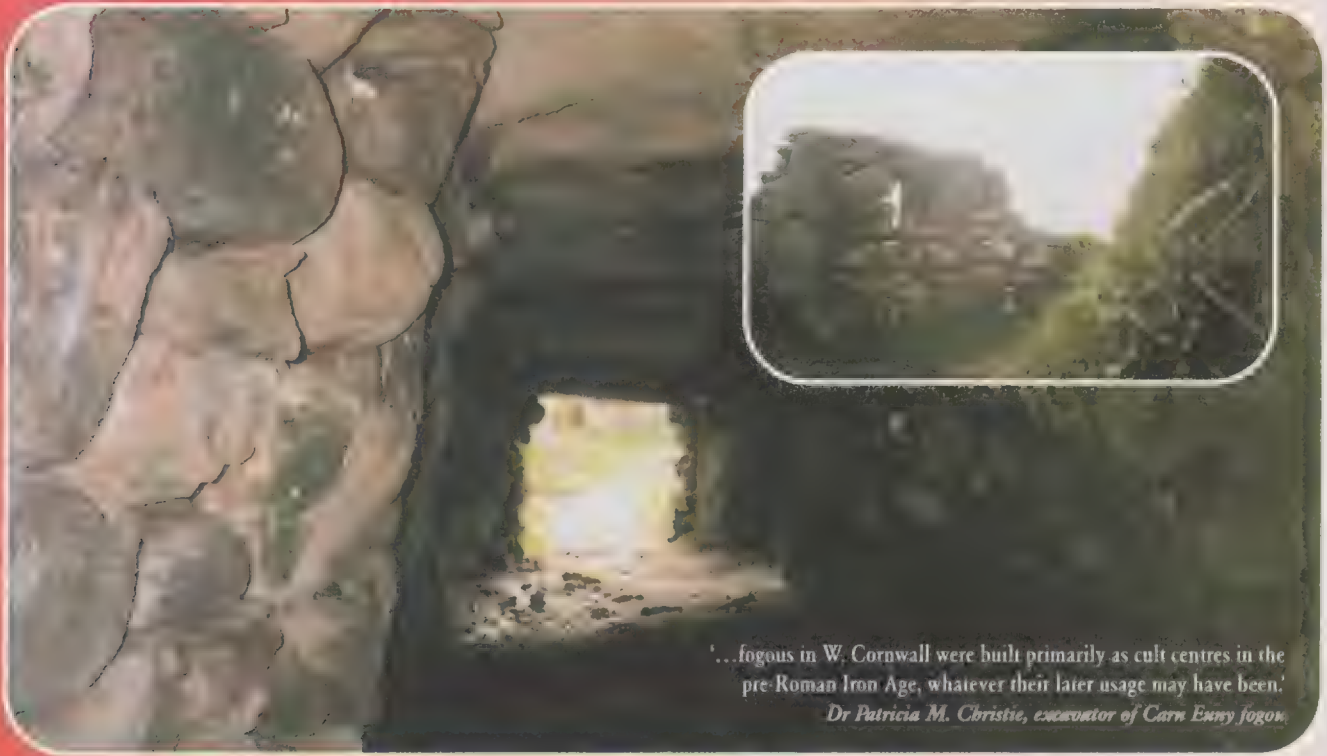
1 a) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.402288

Carn Euny Fogou & Village

Uniquely, this fogou is situated within the ancient village of Carn Euny, a settlement which spans from the late Bronze Age up to the 4th century after Jesus Christ. The only other example of a village fogou was once found at the Chysauster settlement at 203.472350, but this was considered to be dangerous by the authorities, who filled it in rather than restore it. The Carn Euny fogou is very long and its first stage appears to have been the large circular corbelled structure which may have been a sweatlodge of some kind – there is a recess like a fireplace at the north-north-west of this circular room. Then came the long passage and finally the tiny creep passageway. Carn Euny is a beautiful ancient village far from civilisation, situated in a gentle farming area and overlooked by Carn Brea, 'the First & Last Hill'.

The fogou was excavated by William Copeland Borlase, grandson of the Reverend William Borlase, author of 1754's *Antiquities of Cornwall*. Borlase was fifteen years old at the time of excavation and in his youthful exuberance he used high explosives to clear all the domestic rubbish cluttering the fogou passages. Over this and subsequent excavations, the fogou was shown to have been built in four stages around the corbel-chambers of the circular 'sweatlodge' in around 500 BCE. The larger southern entrance is fairly modern, perhaps no more than two centuries old, and was most likely caused by treasure-seekers. The extended fogou had its tiny exit at the north through the creep passageway, an unlikely and unusual arrangement, suggesting that there was more building and rebuilding than was at first thought.



'…fogous in W. Cornwall were built primarily as cult centres in the pre-Roman Iron Age, whatever their later usage may have been.'
Dr Patricia M. Christie, excavator of Carn Euny fogou

NOTES FROM THE FOGOU AT CARN EUNY SETTLEMENT, NR BRANE, CORNWALL: AFTERNOON 23RD MARCH 1992 CE

I am besotted with this place. This is my first fogou – an Iron Age underground passage of indefinite use. I expected to enjoy this village but how charmed I am as well. Of course, I was drawn to the fogou for its one-off nature and its downright weirdness. But I expected it to be wet, miserable and dungeonous, all of which it is not. The passage is five feet, even six feet high in places and over that in width. Its ceiling is reminiscent of West Kennett, whilst its walls are far neater and of an obviously later age. At one end of the fogou, there is a passage off and into a circular 'sweatlodge' around twelve feet across and with a hole in the room. The settlement is so quiet and peaceful and there are goats above the huts eating and playing on the high and natural rocky outcrop. The sense of mystery in this place is great and I could spend the rest of the day in this here fogou… Suddenly, the sky has become overcast and a freak hailstorm has driven me further into the tunnel.

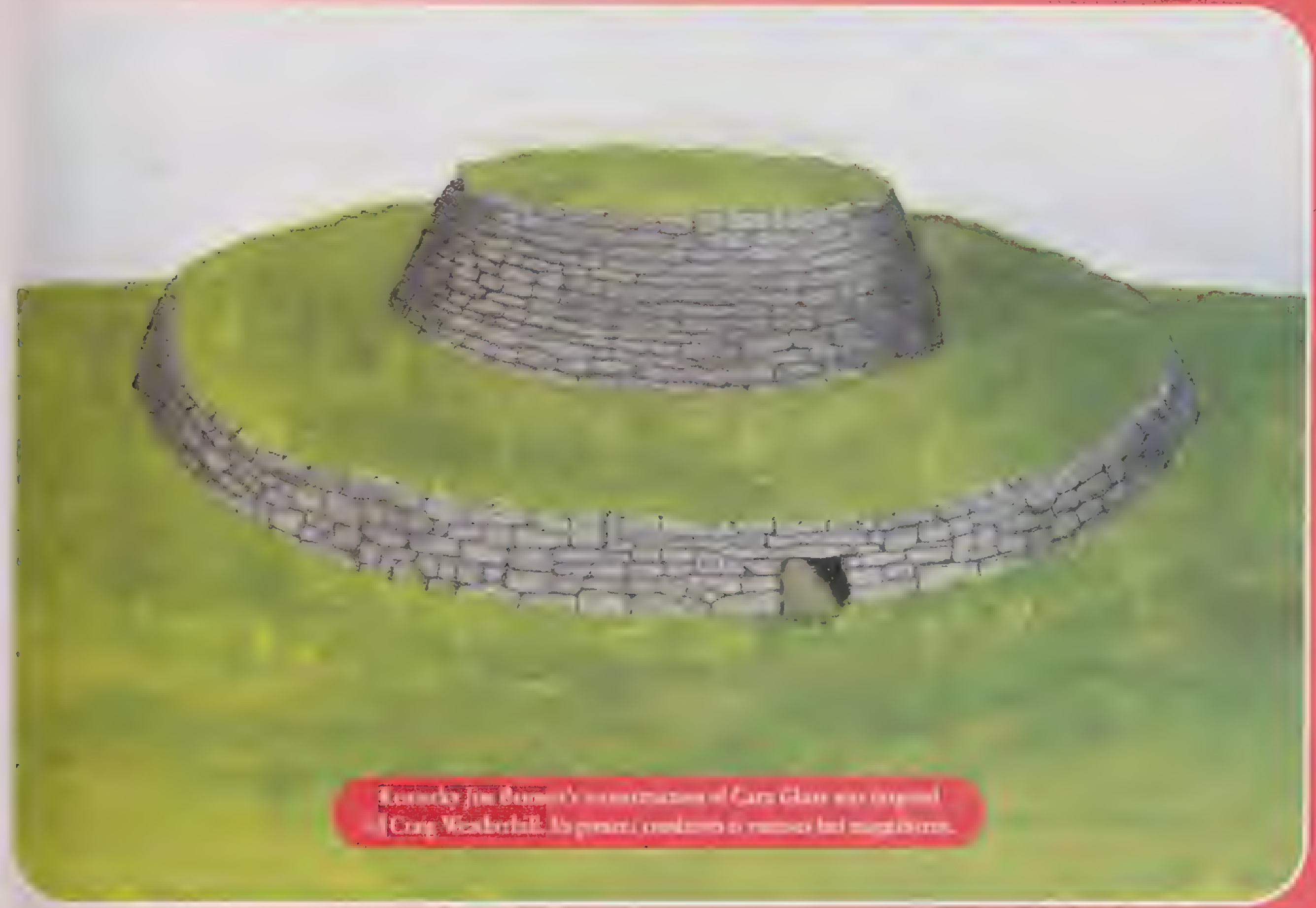
The village of Brane is marked on road atlases, two miles SW of Sancreed. Drive there and continue until road peters out. Carn Euny is clearly signposted, along with the early Christian Chapel Euny.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.355313

1 a) 5

Carn Gluze

Officially known as the Ballowall Barrow, this enormous and regal structure was, in its complete form, quite unlike any other in megalithic culture. An enormous central dome formerly covered a large closed chamber in which were situated several kist burials, which have all been removed. Later, a cairn-ring was built around the base of the main structure – a gigantic megalithic collar around twenty feet thick and eight feet high. Dramatically sited overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Cornwall, the Ballowall Barrow is best visited at sunset when the scene is so awe-inspiring that it leaves the traveller mute with wonder. Allying this view across the horizon with the exquisite and difficult construction of the monument suggests that it was built for those of extreme importance. William Copeland Borlase excavated here in 1878–8, uncovering evidence of much later megalithic culture in the form of middle Bronze Age urns and cremated bones. Though it has been poorly 'excavated' time and time again, there are quite enough surface remains for the visitor to stand and gape at the sheer artistry of this temple-tomb.



[illegible] Jim Barnett's reconstruction of Carn Gluze was inspired [illegible] Craig Weatherhill. Its present condition is [illegible] bad [illegible].

SUNSET NOTES AT CARN GLUZE (THE BALLOWALL BARROW), CAPE CORNWALL: 28TH MARCH 1992 CE

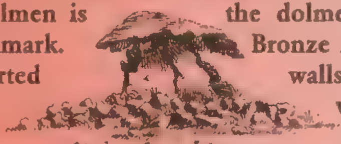
This peaceful night, it's impossible to describe or photograph this feeling. I'm sitting in the remains of this beautiful Bronze Age cairn with the sunset over Cape Cornwall, the Land's End the next promontory way to my left… Walls within walls, all drystone, are supported by the builders' skill and the weight of the rock in the wall. This was a work of great effort and great design. All around me are blue sky and the peace of the evening birds. The tomb must have been intended for someone who commanded great attention (or fear). It's a great shame that more of this tomb is not surviving but there is enough to give an idea of the construction of this wonderful place. But really, were this tomb entirely destroyed and its memory committed to legend, we would still make the pilgrimage…

Carn Gluze requires an O.S. map.

1 a) 6

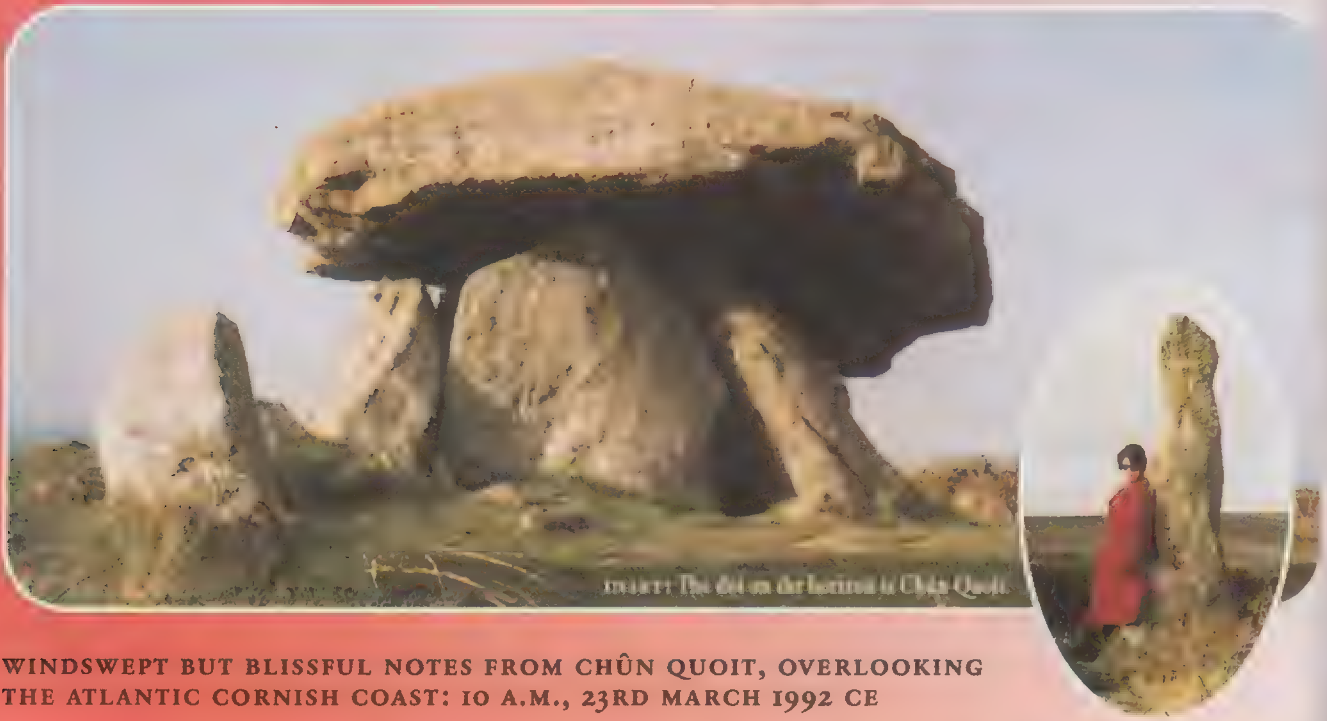
ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.403340

Chûn Quoit & Boswens Menhir



Chun Cromlech 218.

Pronounced 'Choon'. On the hill above Woon Gumpass common stands the wonderful megalithic mushroom of Chûn Quoit. This tiny single-chamber dolmen is far from the road and a famous local landmark. Dramatic light phenomena have been reported within the chamber of the dolmen at various times, and the monument has been a long-term place of study for Paul Devereux's Dragon Project. Its name is shortened from the Cornish *Chy-an-Woone*, meaning 'the House on the Downs'. Other W. Penwith spellings are 'Chywoone' and 'Choon'. Borlase called it 'a pretty regular Kist-vaen', and the low battered mound, which is never more than three feet high, suggests that the original temple may have stood raised separate from the earth, the mound a vestige of earlier relationships with other British monuments. On the hill above the dolmen stands Chûn Castle, the remains of a Bronze Age city. In the last few hundred years the walls were drastically depleted when the castle was used as a convenient quarry for the enlarging of Penzance. The tall monolith known as Boswens Menhir stands directly south about a mile from Chûn Quoit, which appears as a large dot on the horizon. The stone is around eight feet tall and appeared in a drawing in Borlase's 1754 *Antiquities of Cornwall* surrounded by a large cairn of stones. These are long gone, though there still remains a low bank around the great stone.



INSET: The dot on the horizon is Chûn Quoit.

WINDSWEPT BUT BLISSFUL NOTES FROM CHÛN QUOIT, OVERLOOKING THE ATLANTIC CORNISH COAST: 10 A.M., 23RD MARCH 1992 CE

Half an hour ago, we arrived at this primeval unknown place – my eyes feasting at last on the greatest megalithic sacred mushroom in the world. Chûn Quoit is tiny – its chamber is covered on all sides by the upright stones which have guarded its place these 4,500 years. As I sit with my back to the sea, I view the unbeaten splendour of this necropolis, its round barrow gone but its shape clearly defined by earth and haphazard stones. Far to my left is the outline of the Iron Age Chûn Castle and in front lie the gorse and thorns of this moor. Strange blackened and burned areas are before me and the sun struggles to shine out from behind its cloudladen sky. This is a place to make the soul tingle. In fact, all of me is now tingling – from the cold, the wind and the euphoria of this prehistoric mushroom. And from the devotion of the ancient tribe who dragged, conjured and magicked these ancient stones into their mystical position. Now, the sun breaks out overhead and the recent past ... is revealed in its absolute simplicity. Chûn Quoit is as intriguing a place as a man could visit.

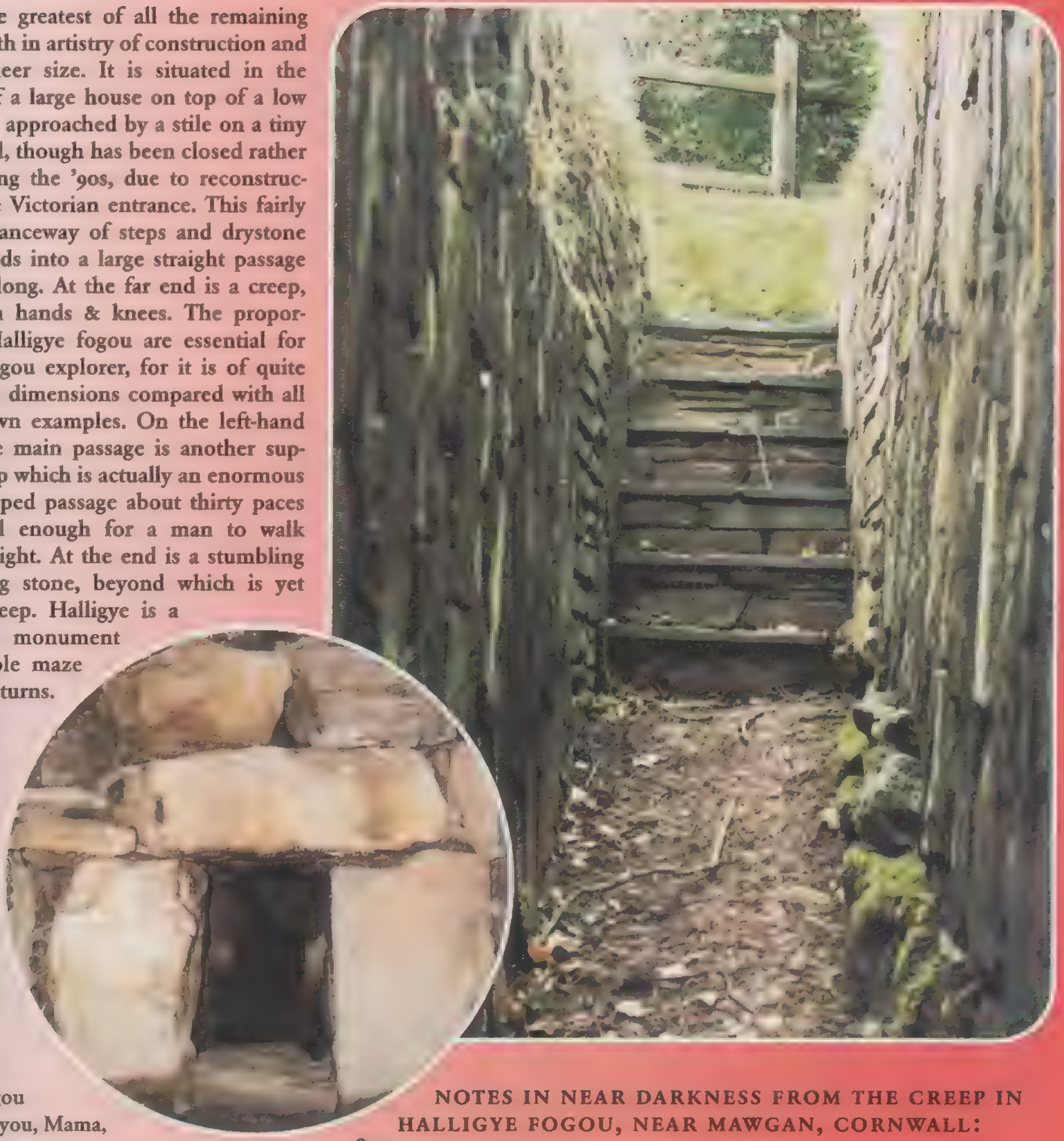
Boswens Menhir is the large stone visible on the left, just before the space-thingies on the B3318 south from Higher Boskaswell. Chûn Quoit really needs an O.S. map, but is visible on the horizon from Boswens Menhir.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.714239

1 a) 7

Halligye Fogou

This is the greatest of all the remaining fogous, both in artistry of construction and also in sheer size. It is situated in the grounds of a large house on top of a low hill, and is approached by a stile on a tiny minor road, though has been closed rather often during the '90s, due to reconstruction of the Victorian entrance. This fairly grand entranceway of steps and drystone walling leads into a large straight passage ten paces long. At the far end is a creep, entered on hands & knees. The proportions of Halligye fogou are essential for the real fogou explorer, for it is of quite formidable dimensions compared with all other known examples. On the left-hand side of the main passage is another supposed creep which is actually an enormous banana-shaped passage about thirty paces long – tall enough for a man to walk almost upright. At the end is a stumbling or blocking stone, beyond which is yet another creep. Halligye is a formidable monument – a veritable maze of twists & turns.



Halligye fogou

Halligye fogou
Alluding to you, Mama,
Safe in the Virgo of
Your uncorrupt drama
Unstill the winds
That caress your hindquarters,
Fulfilling the cleft
Of your several daughters
Fertilise angels
Whose thoughts spell the air,
With a radiant magic
A hallowed inferno
The mystical verve of
The Halligye fogou.

NOTES IN NEAR DARKNESS FROM THE CREEP IN HALLIGYE FOGOU, NEAR MAWGAN, CORNWALL: 28TH MARCH 1992 CE

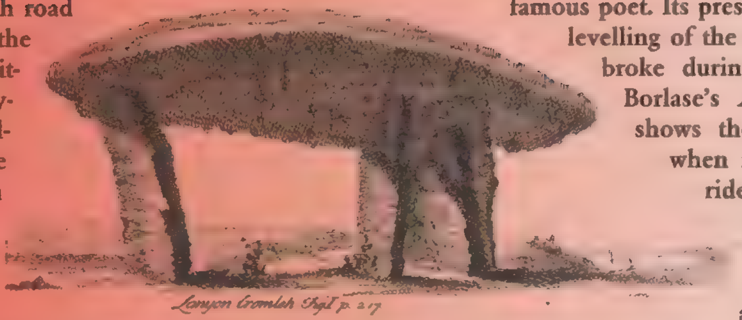
This is the greatest fogou of them all, a grand affair situated high up across a field down numerous B roads and tracks. Halligye is a large stepped-down construction with what seems like forever amounts of walkable dungeonous passages. I lay meditating in this creep, the most distant from the entranceway of any fogou left, and was jerked back to life by a large splat of rainwater. Halligye has another creep at the end of its first main passage. I entered on all fours, but soon had to reverse out of the one-and-a-half feet high stone doorway and reversed back along the passage until I came to the strange concreted altar at the end. Fogous have really got me now. My breath is as solid as the tiny light from my torch and the feeling in this place is one of wonderment. I am entranced.

Halligye requires an O.S. map and has been occasionally closed during the 1990s.

1 a) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.430337

Lanyon Quoit



Close to the Madron–Morvah road is the most famous of all the Cornish quoits. Lanyon is visited by every Cornish holidaymaker and its archetypal dolmen outline is clearly visible on the north-west horizon soon after leaving Madron. Its long mound is now an unrecognisable heap, and even the stones themselves have changed in recent times, as the structure fell during a storm in 1812. The huge thirteen-and-a-half ton capstone, the largest in Cornwall, was restored by the pulleys and levers of the navy's Lieutenant Goldsmith, a nephew of the famous poet. Its present shape is due to the levelling of the uprights, one of which broke during the storm. William Borlase's *Antiquities of Cornwall* shows the monument in 1769, when it was still possible to ride a horse under the capstone. From Borlase's drawing, this monument was clearly once a real flying dolmen like Pentre Ifan,ᴳ in West Wales, or the great Trevethy Quoit,ᴳ south of Bodmin Moor. Lanyon was once surrounded by other sacred sites, and the pools and earthworks strewn around the place are evidence of this.

Lanyon Quoit stands beside the Madron–Morvah road, visible for miles.

NOTES FROM LANYON QUOIT, CORNWALL: 22ND MARCH 1992 CE

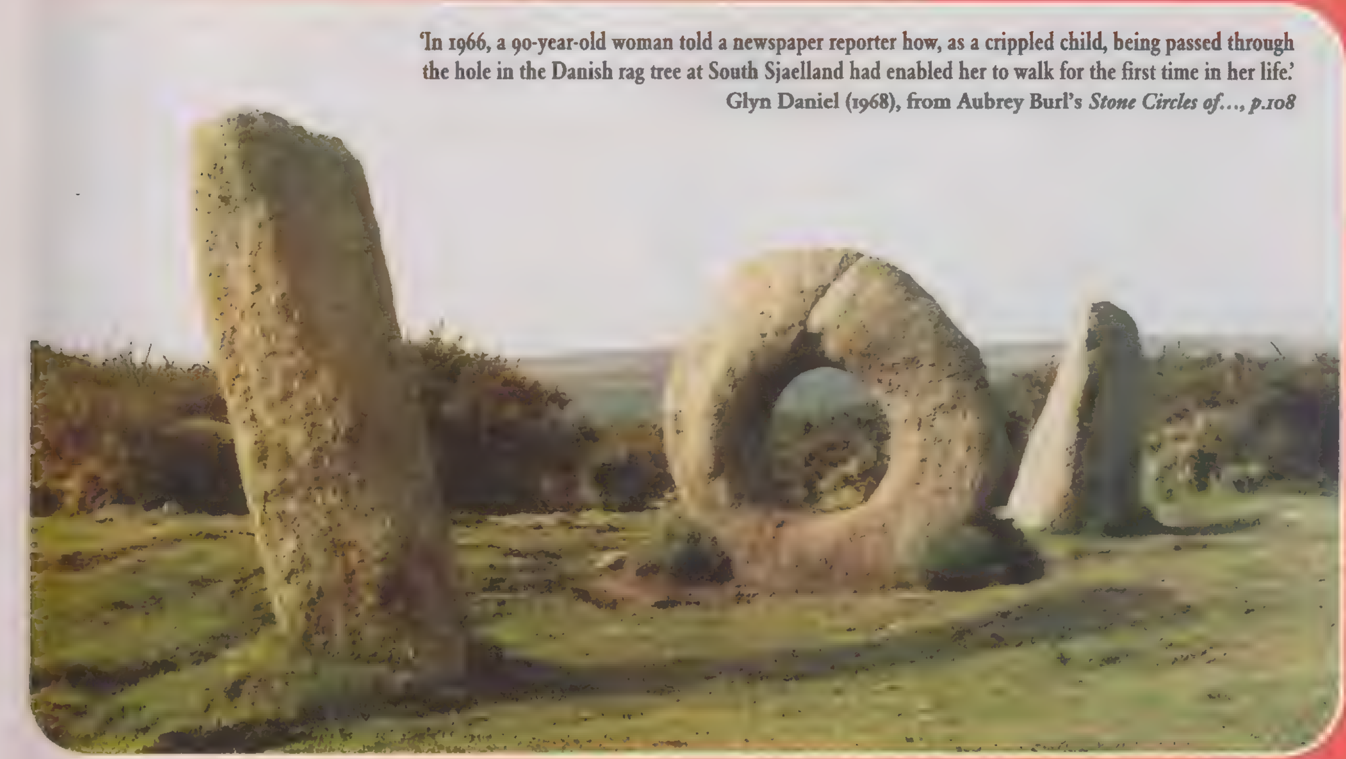
Whoa... I am in danger of being blown into a rockpool! The wind howling around me is making my writing almost indecipherable. I sit on a large rock, the cartoon-like cromlech of Lanyon Quoit in front of me. This is a beautiful and classic cromlech. It was re-erected after a storm ... and is now only five feet high, like a giant's coffee table. But the remains of the mound are easily visible on either side of the monument and it's easy to imagine this as an intriguing and haunting necropolis, set in such an open countryside with the rocky outcrops of the near horizon forming a daunting backdrop with which to attract the devotional. This March wind has cut me to the quick and I am about ready to leave now. Earlier, a group of ramblers had a group shot in front of the quoit, virtually obscuring it. But such is Lanyon Quoit – ancient and intriguing and funny to regard. I've seen this monument so many times in photos. And now I am here. And when I am long, long gone, I will be a funny little man from 'then' and this cartoon cromlech will still be here. Just as though I never did exist.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.426349

1 a) 9

Men-an-Tol

Deep in the commonland, hidden by the gorse and the frequent ground fog of the Penwith peninsula, lurks one of Britain's greatest mysteries – the Men-an-Tol. This relatively small formation looks like a megalithic '1 0 1', and prehistorians since prehistory have been wondering what is its meaning. It is part of tradition to climb through the Men-an-Tol, or 'holed stone', nine times 'against the sun'. This is said to be a cure for rickets and also aids fertility. The site of Men-an-Tol is wonderful. On the near southern horizon stands the silhouette of Lanyon Quoit.^{G} Opposite and to the north, the rocky tor of Carn Galver reaches up towards the sky. On the westerly horizon is the Stegosaurus-back of the enormous hillfort Chûn Castle, at the nearer eastern horizon is the mystical stone circle, the Nine Maidens of Boskednan.^{G} The magic at Men-an-Tol is deep & severe. It is clearly aided by the weather, which can change from chilly, doomy cloud & rain to a beautiful day as you watch it coming in apparently out of nowhere. The stones of Men-an-Tol have changed formation over the years. The site was clearly once a stone circle and there are still vestiges of its original shape. There are five stones remaining from the circle; two have fallen. Stumps of the destroyed stones show through the newly cut gorse, and there are two stumps close together. Curiously, these are directly opposite the holed stone. With its apparently long and changing history of uses, perhaps Men-an-Tol was a movable feast!



'In 1966, a 90-year-old woman told a newspaper reporter how, as a crippled child, being passed through the hole in the Danish rag tree at South Sjaelland had enabled her to walk for the first time in her life.'
Glyn Daniel (1968), from Aubrey Burl's *Stone Circles of…, p.108*

NOTES AT MEN-AN-TOL WITH GORSE NEWLY MOWN: 5.15 P.M., 22ND FEBRUARY 1993 CE

The gorse is low, cut down in a circle. How strange! There are stumps of stone in an arc on the opposite sides of Men-an-Tol and we are seeing this as no other antiquaries ever did. The landscape is barren of people or movement and part of me feels sad that the gorsey seclusion of Men-an-Tol has been intruded upon. Oh, but that's being pedantic … *Notes in sunlight and fog from Men-an-Tol, Land's End Peninsula: 11th February 1994 CE*: Here in bliss I sit, on one of the stumps of the former stone circle, with the foghorn of a tanker sounding over Cape Cornwall and a tractor passing the Men Scryfa 400 yards away. Albany is wading and stomping in the water around the holed stone and Dorian is furious. Early on, we danced in a circle and recited one of Jim and Lisa's chants. It was very powerful and Albany was happy and all smiles. As I sit in this unearthly fog, it occurs to me that the stumps of Men-an-Tol's former circle were actually cut down in antiquity. There is an obvious desire to create another aspect to the monument and I think that there is possibly a former mini-entrance opposite the holed stone. Men-an-Tol has been known only in its famous '101' formation since it was first recorded. Perhaps new rites meant new stones.

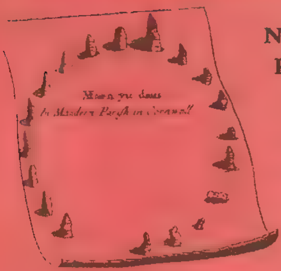
Men-an-Tol is so tiny that it often gets lost in the new vegetation of the year. It requires an O.S. map.

1 a) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
SEE BELOW

The Merry Maidens, the Pipers & Tregiffian

This fine ceremonial complex stands in a beautifully gentle agricultural landscape, quite unlike the rough remove of most of the Land's End's other Neolithic monuments. This means that physical access is particularly easy, but sense of place at the monuments is much harder. The ruined chambered cairn of Tregiffian is cut through by the main road, which continues up the gentle hill past the Merry Maidens. Much of the cairn was used for these road improvements, but an excavation of sorts took place in 1967, at which an urn was found along with cremated bones. The entrance to the cairns also shows a hugely cup-marked stone. Standing on the capstone at Tregiffian makes for the best view of the stone circle, around 300 yards away. The circle is on a gentle slope and is in the finest condition of all the stone circles at the Land's End. It was here that the visionary archaeologist T. C. Lethbridge felt vibrations in the stone fit to shake him to pieces. Over the hill are the two enormous outlying stones: the Pipers. These male stones are thirteen feet and fifteen feet tall. The Piper closest to the stone circle is extraordinarily sexual, looking at the top like a phallus with the glans exposed. The other, even taller, Piper is a huge megalithic dart piercing the earth, its top water-worn into a sheath of lichen-encrusted stone feathers. Legend has it that the whole complex of standing stones was a Saturday night party which went on too long. As the clock struck midnight in St. Buryan, the Pipers realised their mistake and began to run north-east up the hill from what was an un-Christian scene, leaving the Merry Maidens to dance on without music. But just as the maidens were turned to stone for their transgression, so too were the Pipers caught as they ran. And this is the reason that they are so far from the 'party'.


In Madern Parish in Cornwall

NOTES AT SUNDOWN FROM THE MERRY MAIDENS STONE CIRCLE BETWEEN PENZANCE AND THE LAND'S END, CORNWALL: 24TH MARCH 1992 CE

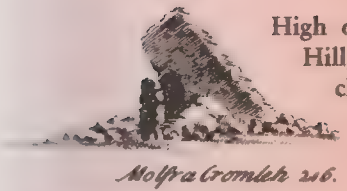
The wind whips across this bluebottle-green grass and the noise of occasional cars is only a minor distraction from the soft and righteous beauty of these stones. The Merry Maidens is the best known circle in Cornwall because it is close to the main road and is perfectly formed in the same way that Castlerigg is perfect. It appeals to the casual visitor and makes them leave thinking stone circles are like this. But though the Merry Maidens lacks the faerie ring seclusion of Boskawen-Un,^{G} it is tough and ready for action. When I arrived, tractors were passing within ten feet of the stones, and all kinds of farm implements and agriculture were very noticeable around the edges of the field. I took forever to position my camera so that there was no kack in the background. Though I'd prefer a tidy backdrop for the stones, their perfection is actually quite added to by the everyday-ness all around. I pray that no tractor driver goes out of control, though – these Merry Maidens have been here forever.

The two enormous Pipers stand on farmland at a crook in the B3315, about five miles south of Penzance. The Merry Maidens stand in a field beside the B3315, 400 yards to the south. Tregiffian is bisected by the B3315 400 yards further on.

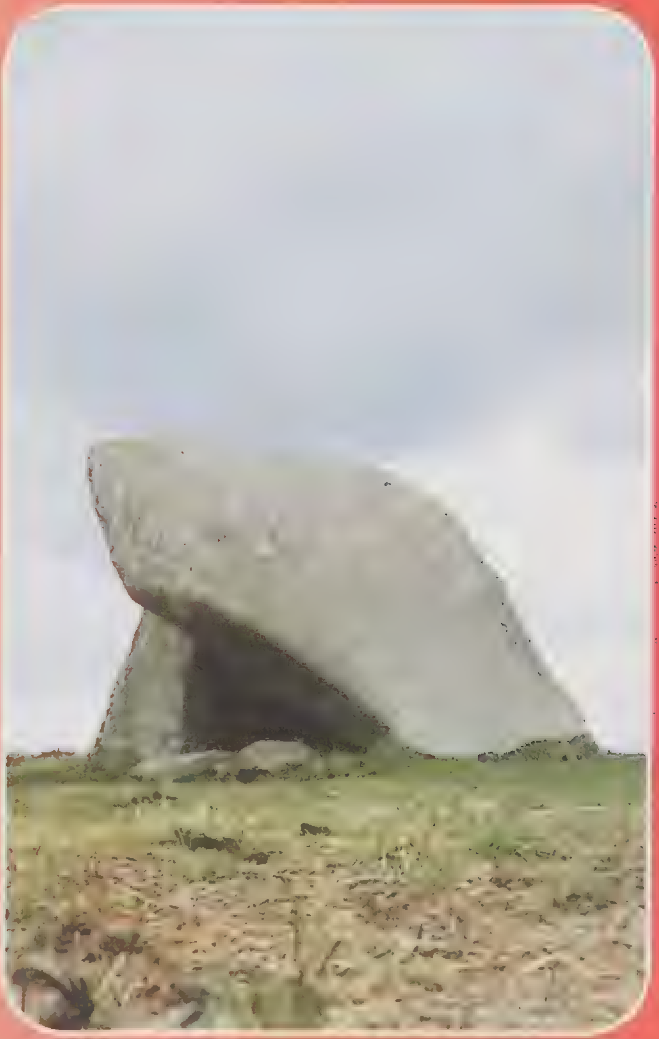
THE MERRY MAIDENS: 203.433245
THE PIPERS: 203.435248
TREGIFFIAN: 203.431245

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.452354

Mulfra Quoit


Molfra Cromleh 216.

High on secluded Mulfra, the Bald Hill, accessible only by a steep climb, stands the ruined chamber of Mulfra Quoit. Since before 1754 the capstone has been resting thus, as though some giant were still finishing his unpacking. It was in that year that William Borlase investigated the 'Molfra Cromleh', crawling behind the fallen capstone and into the tombs with unnamed accomplices. The Reverend Borlase dug & dug. In *Antiquities of Cornwall*, he describes digging up layer upon layer of different coloured muds and clays, until he arrived at 'a flat, black, greasy loam, mix'd in and throughout, more or less, with the yellow natural clay ten inches in depth, under which appeared the hard, natural, stony stratum which lies on the Karn, not mov'd since the deluge'. This temple should really be restored to its full magnificence, especially as the capstone was so late in falling. Proportionately, if Mulfra Quoit were only forty years old, then it would only have lost its capstone aged thiry-nine. But then the views from Mulfra Quoit always bring proportions to my mind. For it is from here that we have a clear view south to St. Michael's Mount, known to the ancient Greeks as Iktis. And it was to Iktis that the great Greek sea-captain Pytheus came in 325 BCE, searching for the legendary tin-islands that the Greeks called the Cassiterides. And such is the enormous span of time that Mulfra Quoit has stood and borne the rigours of the hilltop, that had Pytheus chosen to visit the quoit during his Cornish voyage of discovery and diplomacy, that great monument would have been older to him than he now is to us – a forbidding thought indeed.



Mulfra requires an O.S. map.

NOTES WITHIN THE CHAMBER OF MULFRA QUOIT, MULFRA HILL, CORNWALL: 11.20 A.M., 27TH MARCH 1992 CE

On all sides of this hill, the world passes along to its inevitable conclusion. But on top of this hill, there be no time at all. Since the 1750s, the capstone has leaned against its upright as though waiting to be put back on. Two hundred and forty years – ha. Nothing. We should re-erect this capstone. What is 240 years in the life of a monument at least 4,500 years old? Mulfra Quoit is so charming that I am entranced by it. Far down in the ocean bay of Penzance, I see the ancient St. Michael's Mount, legendary home of the tin industry which so fascinated the Mediterranean civilisations around 300 BCE… When Iron Age traders visited Mulfra Quoit in 300 BCE, it was still older to them than Jesus Christ is to us now! In 300 BCE, this ancient monument was still over 2,000 years old. I love this place with its wind whipping around me. And now I must leave.

1 a) 12

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.435351

Nine Maidens of Boskednan

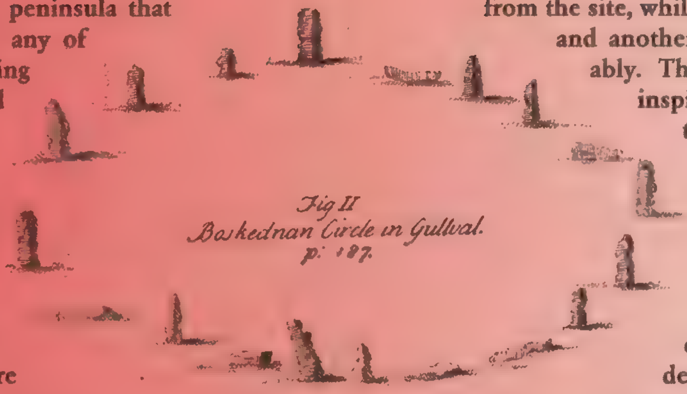


Fig II
Boskednan Circle in Gulval.
p: 187.

There is one circle on the peninsula that bears little resemblance to any of her neighbours. I'm talking about a sassy circle, a wild Sarah Miles in *Ryan's Daughter* circle, a monument that stands on its lonely hilltop, braying and laughing, legs in the air, some stones recumbent, some erect, some at forty-five degrees, who cares? They're nearly all here and that's enough. 'Twas not ever thus. The Nine Maidens of Boskednan was once an elegant nineteen-stone ring like all the others on the Land's End peninsula. When William Borlase surveyed the stones in his 1754 *Antiquities of Cornwall*, thirteen stones were still erect, with the six fallen ones still near their stone holes. Another longstone stood as a large outlier forty-three paces north-west of the circle. But by 1825, W. Cotton was aware of three stones having been removed from the site, whilst five more stones had fallen and another two were leaning considerably. The nearby Ding Dong mine inspired mineral workings around the circle and these crept closer until they were upon the site itself. In 1848, John Thomas Blight noted that local labourers had dug into a barrow close to the circle, in which they had discovered burial urns. The depradations obviously continued until 1861, when J. O. Halliwell reported in his *Rambles in Western Cornwall* that there were now only six uprights, two leaning stones and three fallen stones. This is the state of the circle today, and Borlase's longstone has been reduced to a mere stump. John Barnatt has noticed an obvious relationship with the sacred Carn Galva at 203.42.36. away to the north-west, suggesting a possible former ceremonial trackway from the circle to the sacred hill.

GALE FORCE NOTES FROM BOSKEDNAN NINE MAIDENS STONE CIRCLE, CORNWALL: 11.20 A.M., 24TH MARCH 1992 CE

This circle is outrageous. Where Boskawen-Un is ultra-secluded and fortified, these Nine Maidens are on top of a heath so constantly devastated by wind that I had trouble standing still long enough to take a photograph. The long trek up the path past the Men-an-Tol^{G} and the Men Scryfa is strange, especially as the destroyed cairn 250 yards away has upright stones and made me think I was approaching a ruined circle. Dorian meditated long on the recumbent stone next to the highest stone of the circle (about six feet), but any group devotion would have originally been wild and fiery – this is no place for the peace of the gods. The circle is like a megalithic crown thrown down by a giant on this savage hillside. From this place, a direct worship of any gods must be possible – it is a direct vantage point up to the sky, since all sides of the horizon fall away, leaving the ceiling of the sky the natural place to divert the eyes… Now the sun is high overhead and all the clouds have been banished to the horizon…

This site requires an O.S. map.

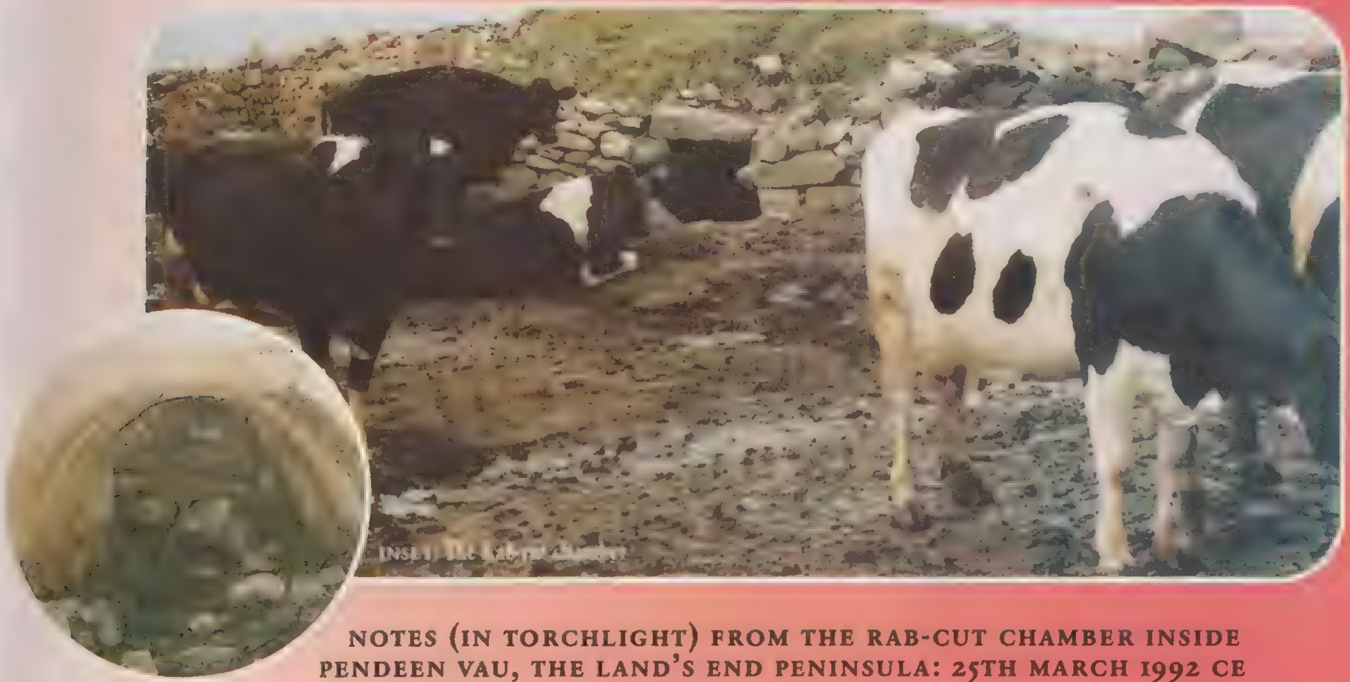
ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.381356

1 a) 13

Pendeen Vau

Pronounced 'Pendeen Voe'. At the end of an old track, in a farmyard filled to the brim with cows during the day and flooded at night by the beacon of Pendeen Watch lighthouse, overlooking the great rocks of the Three Stone Oar that stand just a few hundred yards out in this glorious Atlantic Ocean, amidst all this is a fogou. Pendeen Vau is a wild and inspirational place, a scruffy fogou in a great Cornish hedge, with creepy legends and an even creepier creep. For it is here that ancient Humanity created its cave-at-the-end-of-the-world. It is an inelegant but exciting stumble into the often puddle-filled lower passages of Pendeen Vau. And here at the passage corner is the tiny eighteen-inch square entrance into the most bizarre creep of any Cornish fogou. The creep chamber is rab-cut, that is, cut directly into the clay. There are no supports in this damp cocoon, which is, as a consequence, always wet and sticky and extremely difficult to enter, even on your belly. There is always a pond of water in the centre of this twenty-five foot clay chamber, probably caused by the antiquary William Borlase. In his *Antiquities of Cornwall* (1754), he wrote: 'I caus'd the floor of the Cave to be dug in two places, but found neither cell nor grave.' This is hardly surprising. The most willing person has a problem entering the rab-cut chamber – inserting an unhelpful cadaver would be a nightmare. Even the visionary artist Ian McNeil Cooke was so chilled by the prospect of the rab-cut chamber that he only entered it in 1993 CE, despite his pressing need to finish his epic fogou odyssey *Mother & Sun*, fifteen years in the making.

The legends surrounding Pendeen Vau are dark and frightening. Winter solstice sees the arrival of the beautiful Spirit of Pendeen Vau – a woman dressed all in white with a red rose in her mouth. In another legend, a similar White Lady seduces her man deep into the fogou, whereupon she turns into 'an horrific entity'. In this story, the chambers are said to go for many miles under the Atlantic, and even scholars believed this to be true as late as 1584, when Norden the Antiquary, in his *Survey of Cornwall*, wrote that 'the tide flows into this cave, at high water, very far under the earth'. In its construction, Pendeen Vau is a simple and well-executed Iron Age bunker. But in legend and in everyday life, Pendeen Vau is a fabulous earth centre and a self-generating mystery. In 1861, a tin miner told the antiquary John Thomas Blight that the passages went all the way to the Scillies, 'about twenty-six miles distant!'



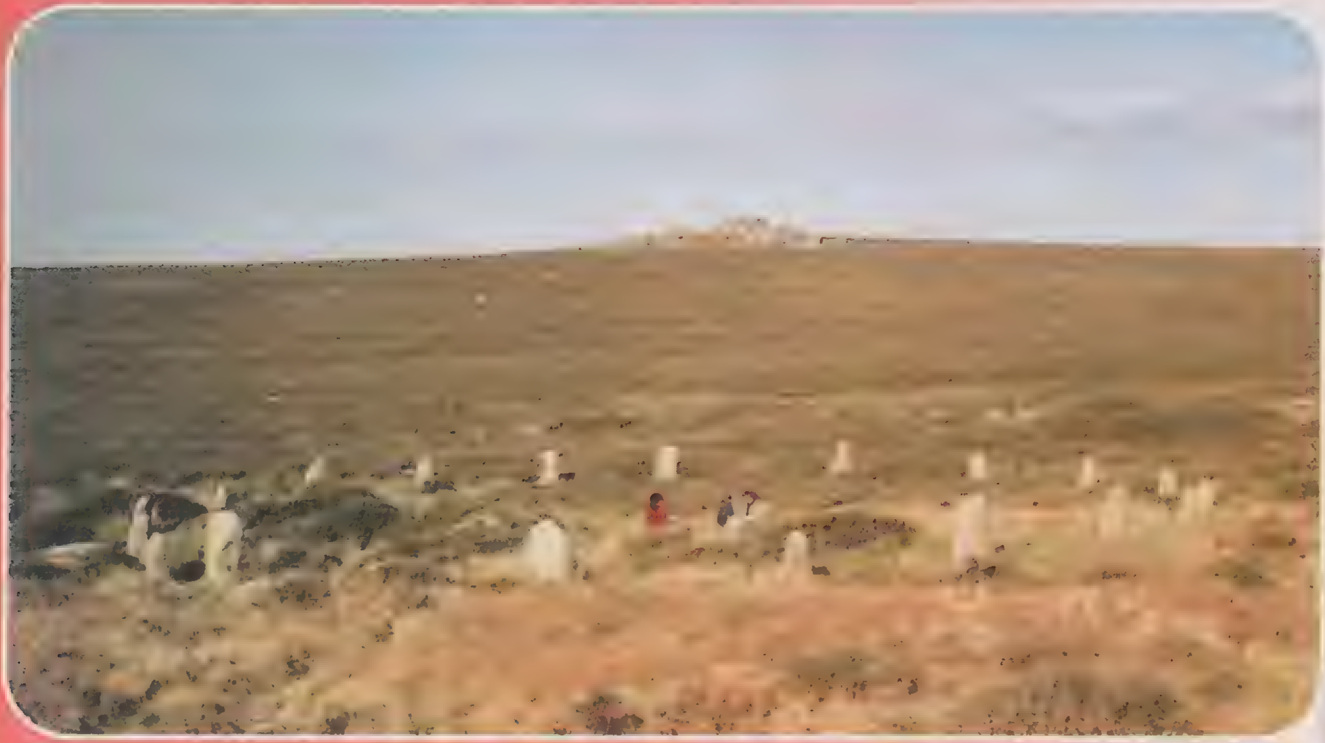
NOTES (IN TORCHLIGHT) FROM THE RAB-CUT CHAMBER INSIDE PENDEEN VAU, THE LAND'S END PENINSULA: 25TH MARCH 1992 CE

...I'm facing the end of the unlined or rab-cut passage where I meditated in absolute silence and awaited the arrival of the White Lady... The fogou is more claustrophobic than that at Carn Euny, its walls only four-and-a-half feet high and the width about four to five feet in places. The fogou is in a farm yard ... a place to spend time, though I would imagine that the claustrophobia could become terrifying. The entrance to the fogou is two-and-a-half feet high but once inside and on muddy floor, I had to slide into this long chamber through a tiny one-foot high entranceway. I'm sitting on a rock surrounded by pools of water with rocks jutting out and the roof grazes my head as I write. Now I shall leave this precarious position. What a place!

Take the B3306 to Pendeen, taking the right turn to the highly visible Pendeen Watch lighthouse. After about half a mile, take the right turn to Pendeen Manor farm and ask permission.

Tregeseal Dancing Stones & Carn Kenidjack

Once there were three great stone circles standing in a line below the great sacred hill called Carn Kenidjack, known as 'The Hooting Carn'. There was a chambered cairn, many ring-cairns and a line of small holed-stones along Kenidjack Common. There was a settlement and there was a vast ceremonial centre, all focusing on the great hill. Now most of this is gone. The holed-stones still remain, but the first circle is long gone, while the second survived until a disastrous field clearance around 1960. The monuments all fall on a piece of still common land being encroached by farming. And yet the remaining stone circle at Tregeseal is a delightful faerie ring, its silver-grey stones exceedingly crown-like against the rich and royal maroon-purples of the springy pubic gorse. Carn Kenidjack towers over the site though it is a distance away. This strange portmanteau word appears to consist of the male and female genitalia. 'Kenid', as in 'Kennet', being the 'cunt', same root as 'cunning' and 'kin'. The second word is a slang word meaning 'priapic'; the Gower peninsula stone Sampson's Jack is intended to mean Sampson's erection. Kennet-Jack. A male–female meeting place, a sacred space beyond. Like some living sculpture of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Great Eastern, this lofty citadel dominates the eye at every moment. To approach it is to sink back to the awe-inspired infancy of natural Humanity. The raffish stone towers, the natural cyclopean walls – to stand on Carn Kenidjack and feel the silence without and the breathing within of the great 'Hooting Carn' is to sit quietly and ponder the exceptional wonders of Nature at the very tip of Britain.

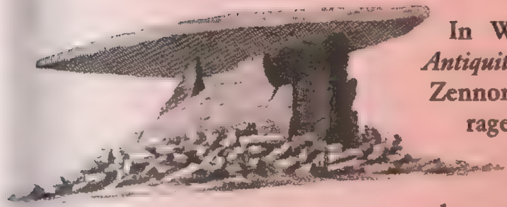


NOTES FROM TREGESEAL STONE CIRCLE, BETWEEN THE LAND'S END AND ST. IVES: 11.30 A.M., 25TH MARCH 1992 CE

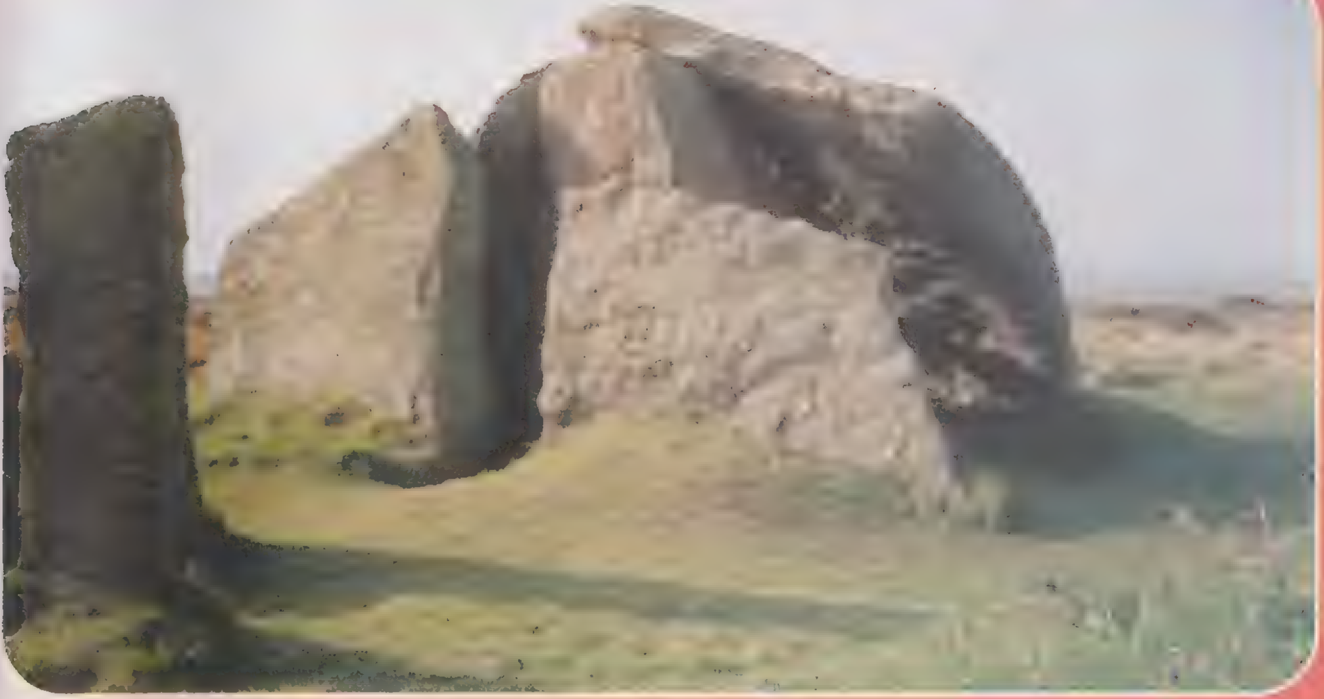
Sitting with my back to the largest stone of this circle, the overwhelming landscape feature is the huge rocky outcrop in front and above me called Carn Kenidjack. The circle is much more complete than I expected, having been restored in places, but the other circle seems long gone and I found no traces whatsoever. In the centre are the remains of a modern Pagan fire and this heath is ideal and out of the way for real relaxed meditation. Unfortunately, my time here is distracted by the need to wait for the sun and the use of a high step-ladder which I placed high on a stone hedge in order to get a perspective of the place.

Tregeseal requires an O.S. map and an attitude!

Zennor Quoit



In William Borlase's *Antiquities of Cornwall*, Zennor Quoit stood outrageously large and was known as the greatest work in the area. But now its five massive side slabs no longer hold the great seventeen-foot long capstone, which slid from its perch when a farmer attempted to demolish the great dolmen. Even in its near destruction, Zennor Quoit stands overwhelming and regal. It resides high on the downs at the Carne upon Zennor Hill, close between Sperris Quoit and the Logan stone. Zennor is a megalithic lioness at rest, with views forever on a clear day and a hunched twenty-minute walk down slippery slopes on a rainy one. For this great temple, its seclusion is everything. No-one ever just passes Zennor Quoit, for it is in the middle of nowhere (or everywhere, judging by ancient remains). People have to go there. It was once the most outrageous of all the Cornish tombs, far bigger than any other on the peninsula, and even bigger in true size than the monster at Trethevy,ᴳ just south of Bodmin Moor. It was in 1861 that a local farmer decided to cut up the great quoit for use as a cattle-shed. The tooled uprights in front of the quoit are his handiwork, and it was only the then vicar of Zennor, a relative of William Borlase, who saved the monument with a bribe of thirty shillings. But by that time the capstone had fallen and the work of 5,000 years was undone in a moment. But still we must be thankful for the saving of this ruin. Just visit the Nine Stones of Boskednanᴳ and imagine the improvements in atmosphere were just two more stones standing. But there is no sense of time on these hilltops, only a sense of forever, and the place of these monuments is timeless and Zennor seems eternal.



NOTES IN BLAZING FEBRUARY SUNSHINE FROM ZENNOR QUOIT, W. PENWITH: 23RD FEBRUARY 1993 CE (LATE MORNING)

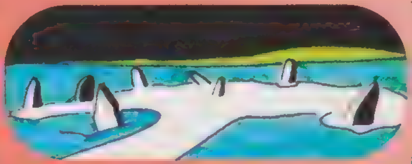
This barren hilltop is hot this morning. Even the cold breeze cannot turn me down. The huge structure of the quoit is right in front of me as I sit leaning against one of the four uprights standing at an angle to the entrance... The glorious outcrop of Zennor Carn stands on the near horizon and all around the far distant horizons are the same landmarks we can see from Men-an-Tol,ᴳ Lanyon,ᴳ Mulfra,ᴳ the Nine Maidens of Boskednan, etc. It's a 360-degree vista worthy of many hours up here. This is a lucky day – a summer day in the winter. The quoit is closest to Trethevy in its atmosphere, and though the capstone has slipped, it is still a fearful and awe-inspiring place. The façade stones give Zennor Quoit a special regality and certainly explain the nature of these extreme tombs. The dead would have guarded these lands with a ghostly omnipresence and I can imagine lonely nights up here would be quite impossible.

Zennor Quoit requires an O.S. map.

1 b) 1

ORDNANCE SURVEY
201.236782

Nine Stones of Altarnun



Situated almost a mile into the vast giant's counterpane of East Moor, the Nine Stones of Altarnun are only reached by an arduous but spiritually uplifting climb up the steep rocky pathway from Tolcarne farm to Clitters. The farmyard is soon left way behind in the valley and the sharply rising path becomes a stream in all but the driest seasons. Then the luxurious vegetation of the lower ground suddenly gives way to the familiar high grasses of the Cornish moors, and sure-footed longhorn cattle can be seen grazing on the mountainside. A single tumulus, with one peculiar and scruffy young tree growing out of it, comes into view at the very top of the summit, at which point the climb seems over. But it is not. Up and ever up we scramble, until East Moor finally opens out into a vast and endless sunken plateau many miles across. Far in the distance stand the lonely stones of the Altarnun circle. The Nine Stones were restored in 1889 by R. F. Dodd, the squire of Trebartha, though they retain a dishevelled appearance. Many stones are leaning and all stand in deep pools of water, the soil around each stone worn away by the cattle who are constantly using them as rubbing posts. To the north-east is an alignment of small standing stones. These are parish boundaries, and there is a wonderful example of one of William Borlase's beloved 'Druidical Basins' lying along the alignment. This is a very bulky, flat and round recumbent stone, with three large cup-marks or natural basins filled with rainwater. These components unite to create a strange face, a cross between the Man-in-the-Moon and T. C. Lethbridge's Magog hill-figure. Whilst engaged on fieldwork at the Altarnun circle, John Barnatt, the author of *Prehistoric Cornwall*, discovered that the disorientating qualities of the stones had been put to practical use by the army. After commenting to a supervising officer that the young soldiers were leaving the circle up to sixty feet off their chosen line, Barnatt was told that compass reading is so arbitary there that soon everybody gets lost and has to learn to read the map very quickly!

ALTARNUN STONE CIRCLE, AN ACCOUNT OF ITS DISORIENTATING QUALITIES, ITS ENVIRONMENT AND ITS WISH TO REMAIN QUIET: NOTES AT DAWN FROM MOSS FARM RIDING, BLISLAND, ON BODMIN MOOR: 28TH FEBRUARY 1993 CE

All morning the freezing frosty day had been a cloudless inspiring blue, but now huge Blakean banks of cloud were coming from the north-west and I was excited to get any shots… But as we approached Trevague down a series of tiny lanes, a freak hailstorm hit our car … and we were hopelessly lost… The wind was howling and the hail put us both off… Then we found Trevadlock. And slowly, by a series of determined efforts, found ourselves at Tolcarne farm, one-and-a-half miles from the circle, but steeply upwards, and the only pathway was also a rocky stream. The sun was fading so Gerry stayed in the car and I set off up the rocky bed of the stream, walking on boulders to keep my feet as dry as possible. The walk straight uphill was exhilarating and as I came to the Clitters wood and a herd of unfriendly cattle, I cut straight up the mountainside towards a barrow/cairn (marked 'Tumulus' on the map) with a single tree growing ridiculously out of the top. I psyched myself up for the circle being thirty or so yards beyond. But as I got closer to the top, the sky was on all sides as dramatic as any I have seen this trip. Passing the cairn, the moor opened out and before me, rearing like a most dreadful tidal wave, was a huge bank of black billowing cloud controlled by some Creator force. I looked across this wild sinking plateau for the circle and from behind the cloudbank came the sun. It burned my eyes across the plateau half a mile away and directly onto the tiny circle called Altarnun. I went down on my knees, grinning with delight, high on this lonely plateau. My camera was at the ready and I snapped an instamatic shot but to no avail – this was a moment, a moment unrecordable and a moment between Creator, circle and myself. As I staggered delighted towards the stones, I noticed to my right an alignment of small stones, five or six, and I reminded my euphoric self to look for them on my travels back to the farm in the dark… The stones of Altarnun steadfastly refused to get closer and I walked and walked until, eventually, they did appear only yards away… I kneeled down, my bag and cameras at my feet, and the loud buffeting wind ceased to a vague swishhh. The stones and I became one and I lost my self and my feeling of this world. The centre stone advanced towards me then backed away, advanced then retreated, over and over like the tide. The wisdom of the place held me and at all times I expected the stones to disappear and reveal what was in their place. The stones represented something ancient, wise and true; and stones on a moorland was only their disguise. My eyes closed and I was deep inside them when something forced me to open my eyes. My head was thrown back and I opened my eyes to the crescent moon directly above me. With all the banks of cloud, with all the strange weather systems colliding, the moon still appeared clear and perfect directly above me… Time shifts and this heavenly arena in which the stones were placed held me there for hours… Finally, I was ready to leave. My spine tingled and there were pins and needles in my feet. I circled the stones once more and kissed the centre stone goodbye. It was still light as I made my way to the stone row 400 yards or so to my north and … when I arrived at the car, I had been gone for less than one whole hour!

Altarnun stands in the middle of Twelve Men's Moor and requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.910123

1 b) 2

Bant's Carn

On the north-west coast of St. Mary's, at the end of a golf-course, stands Bant's Carn, the most famous of all the Scillonian entrance graves and a wonderfully placed monument. Bant's Carn stands on the steepest crest of the magical Halangey Down, with distant views across to Samson Flats. There is a Keltic field-system at the south-east of the monument, a lynchet of which actually forms part of the side of Bant's Carn, and this chambered cairn has been lovingly restored recently. The cairn is about twelve paces in diameter with an unroofed but stone-lined passage to the chamber's entrance. Inside is a boat-shaped chamber about five feet wide and the same in height, roofed by four large capstones. This apparently remote site has had great luck in the 20th century for it was excavated in 1900 by George Bonsor, then almost destroyed in 1910. Bonsor's excavations at the turn of the century included some fine discoveries, including part of a round Neolithic bowl which was found in the passageway, as well as the more usual cremated bone and later Bronze Age pottery discovered in the chambers. In 1910, attempts were made to destroy Bant's Carn, at which time serious depradations took place, including the knocking down of the first entrance capstone. Local historians argued for its security and won the day, though the fallen capstone was not re-erected until the general repairs of 1970, which also shored up other minor erosions and problems. To the east about 200 yards are the vast remains of an Iron Age and Romano-British period settlement, with interconnecting houses. These are easily found at 203.910124.

The wonderfully shaped standing stone of Long Rock is less than half a mile from Bant's Carn. It is a great broad-based eight foot menhir surrounded by foliage. In *Ancient Scilly* Paul Ashby suggested that the 'top of the stone, though much weathered, might have originally borne a schematic face representation'. In her book *Pagan Cornwall*, Cheryl Straffon has suggested that the top of this stone with its deep basin may have represented a vulva, but its general shape is really like some strange phallic finger. The Ordnance Survey Number is 203.914124.

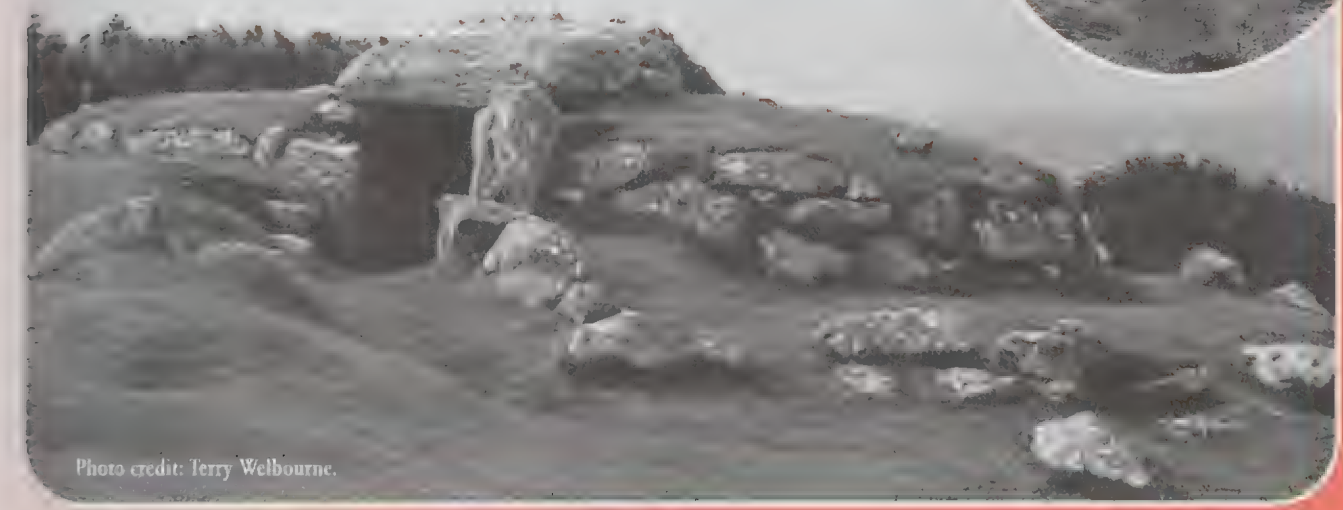


Photo credit: Terry Welbourne.

NOTES FROM BANT'S CARN, ST. MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY: 29TH MAY 1995 CE

These stones have suffered in their green river valley, bleak and desolate and beautifully lonely – but this place is a well defined temple in its extremely lucky position overlooking cairns and outlying stones. It is close in atmosphere to the megalithic circle, though that is much larger and embanked all around, giving a feeling of real 'substance' to its place as a monument. These remaining stones of beautiful grey granite have an almost knitted outward appearance. Only one other stone is standing inside this large late Neolithic cairn kerbed with now fallen stones which have all fallen outwards, increasing the size of the inner circle, because the embankment has pushed outwards. Though the site is severely battered, its size cannot distort such a former glory. The entrance stones' remaining in place is a fine bonus and, like Carn Llechart^G in South Wales, the whole place evokes a sad atmosphere of delight.

Bant's Carn is important to tourism on St. Mary's and is signposted and marked on most road atlases.

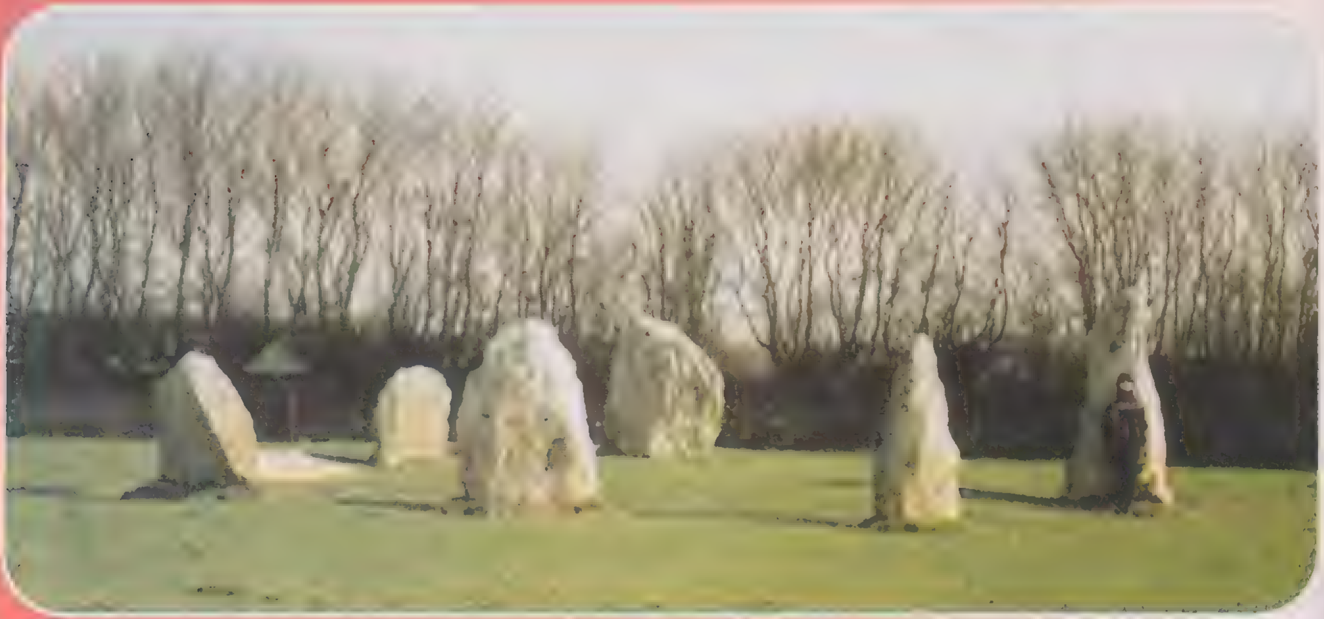
1 b) 3

ORDNANCE SURVEY
201.236583

Duloe Stone Circle

In the village of Duloe, close to the road but unknown to all but those who seek it, is a remarkable stone circle. For this monument is quite unlike any other in the whole of Cornwall. Whereas other Cornish circles tend to be large and open, Duloe is tiny – its thirty-seven foot diameter being less than half that of the average-sized Boskawen-Un,[G] and only one third the size of such monster rings as Stannon[G] and Fernacre,[G] high on Bodmin Moor. Where Cornish stone circles tend to be constructed of granite pillars a maximum of four feet high, Duloe has large white unhewn blocks of quartz, the largest of which is over nine feet tall. This place has no legends and follows no traditions – the Duloe post-mistress says it is only known in the village as 'the stone circle'! Perhaps Duloe can be compared to the Nine Stones at Winterbourne Abbas,[G] in Dorset, but even this famous squat squad of hunched inward-facing stone Druids lacks the sheer icy authority that Duloe's stunning white quartz can bring. Even on a bright sunny day, the Duloe stones remain chilling and unworldly. But on a cold wintery day, this brotherhood closes ranks even as you approach across the pasture, and the visitor feels as shut out as the frozen sheep huddling at the western edge of the field wall. The circle was first noted in 1801, and was 'restored' in the early 1860s, when a 'hedge' that cut through the circle was removed, revealing stones no.3 and no.7. None of the stones appear to have been moved at any time, except the large fallen north stone, under which was discovered 'a ribbon-handled urn and a deposit of strewn charcoal'.[1] Perhaps it is Duloe's very obscurity – far from the beaten track of accepted 'ancient Cornwall' – which has allowed this stone circle to remain so feisty and exciting.

The name Duloe in its Keltic pronunciation would have been 'Dillow' or 'Deelow', suggesting some kind of Viking addition of 'low' or 'mound' to the Keltic 'Dee', which means god/goddess. If so, this name would then allude to Duloe church, which stands on a raised bank near the circle. Perhaps the bank acted as a hill altar in tandem with the stone circle. At the nearby St. Cybi's Well, a local farmer removed the stone basin from the well, whereupon he fell desperately ill and had endless misfortune. This wrath of the Water Goddess was mirrored at St. Patrick's Well in County Limerick. A local man stole the well money and drank it away that night. But on emerging from the pub, he was struck stone dead of no apparent causes.[2]



NOTES FROM THE RECUMBENT STONE, DULOE STONE CIRCLE, CORNWALL: 26TH MARCH 1992 CE

Why is this circle not famous? I'm sitting on the recumbent stone at the coldest spot I have yet been. But these eight quartz blocks are wonderful and shine every time the sun comes from behind its clouds; they shine in a white quartz glow that lights up the whole field. One stone is chipped and tiny, but the rest are massive and unique. Sheep are in this field and the church is away to my right. Duloe Circle is a beautiful monument. In the summer, it would be a joy to stay all afternoon. Now I must leave, as I can hardly breathe in this wind and my hands are like icicles.

Drive to Duloe, four miles south of Liskeard, and ask at the village post office. The circle is situated halfway between the post office and the church – a walk from one to the other will pass one farm, in whose pasture the circle stands.

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[1] John Barnatt, *The Stone Circles of Cornwall*

[2] James Rattue, *The Living Stream*

ORDNANCE SURVEY
200.(HUR)258714/(CHEESE)258724

1 b) 4

The Hurlers & the Cheesewring

At Minions, on the south side of Bodmin Moor, amongst the wasteland of ghost buildings and linear spoil-heaps that follow the minerals across the moorland, stand the remains of three large stone circles. These are the Hurlers, men turned to stone for playing the Cornish game of hurling on the Sabbath, or so the legend goes. Just 100 yards to the west-south-west stand the Pipers, two standing stones each around five feet tall, also supposedly turned to stone for playing on the Sabbath. The Hurlers were once part of a spectacular ceremonial centre, but the three circles are now in various states of disrepair. The most complete of the Hurlers is the 110-foot diameter north circle, which has retained sixteen of its original twenty-eight stones. The central circle is slightly wider, but here seventeen of the twenty-eight stones remain. The southern ring is in the worst condition of all – only nine mainly prostrate stones remain of a likely original twenty-six. These local granite standing stones have all been shaped and the tallest is almost six feet high, which is very tall for a Cornish circle. And they are dramatically sited in the shadow of the legendary rock-idol, the Cheesewring. Two hundred and fifty years ago, the great Cornish antiquary William Borlase believed that this great stone stack was erected by the Druids. This seems unlikely. Nature is an infinitely more wonderful creator than Humanity could ever be – look at the Giant's Causeway, Ayers Rock or the Old Man of Hoy. More likely it was the wind & rain which formed these teeter-totter giants. It was then just up to the Ancients to reveal the most interesting stacks, by pushing over the inferior ones.

Between the Cheesewring and the Hurlers, a brisk walk from both, is the famous Rillaton Barrow. Here is a fine Bronze Age bowl barrow with a large kist exposed at the side. The kist was opened in 1818, at which time faïence beads, a bronze dagger and a handled gold beaker were discovered. This cup was lost for many years, but was subsequently found in daily use in the dressing-room of George V! As Mel Brooks said in the film *History of the World*, 'It's good to be the king.'

Legend has it that the Hurlers were uncountable for many centuries. Once a man had tried to count the stones by placing a loaf upon each standing stone. But the Devil followed him around the stones, taking a few here and there. Other new attempts were made to count the stones, but all met with no success. But then Dr Yonge, in 1675, tried the old custom of placing a loaf on each stone and very soon he had computed the number of stones. He had tried a new method in order to beat the Devil – by buying a fixed amount of 'penny Loafes and laying one on each hurler did compute by the remainder what number they were'.

NOTES FROM THE HURLERS STONE CIRCLE, BODMIN MOOR, CORNWALL: EARLY AFTERNOON, 26TH MARCH 1992 CE

This place… I arrived in sunlight. As I got out of the car, the heavens opened and a hailstorm tried to drive me back. Far beyond, at the huge legendary outcrop of rock called the Cheesewring, the sun was all smiles. Soon, the Hurlers were all smiles – except for the wind, which blew me off my stepladder as I took a photograph. Perhaps Bodmin Moor was less desolate in the Bronze Age. Or perhaps the stones were not in the mood to be filmed. This place gives a new meaning to the word 'desolation'.

The Hurlers are marked on many road atlases, but are hard to find. They stand north of Minions in old tin-mining country. An O.S. map may be necessary as a description is impossible.

1 b) 5

ORDNANCE SURVEY
203.922126

Innisidgen

Up on the north-east coast of St. Mary's, overlooking the beautiful Crow Sound, stand the two Scillonian cairns of Innisidgen. These monuments are best approached from a pathway to the south, with a long view over to the eastern Isles of Great Ganilly, Ragged Island and their associated islets. Innisidgen Higher is the better preserved of the two and is a large oval Scillonian passage grave in fine condition. The mound is about eight paces in diameter, with a kerb of large stones surrounding the base, in order to keep the weight of the cairn material from bursting outwards. Inside is a large slab-sided chamber about fifteen feet long, along with courses of stones. The roof of five large capstones completes this wonderfully simple monument. Close by at the north is Lower Innisidgen, a more ruinous monument. The mound of this cairn utilises natural outcrops and fits more snugly into its surroundings, but many of its kerbstones are gone, causing the shape of the cairn to be far less defined. The south entranceway leads into a trapezoidal chamber.

The Long Rock

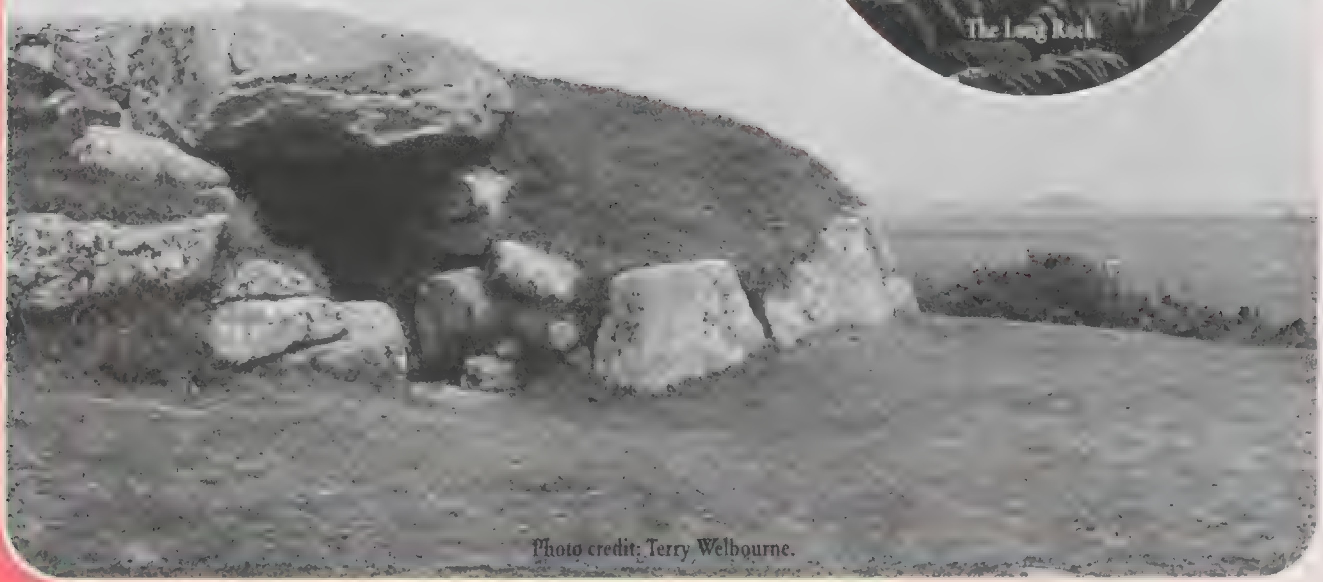


Photo credit: Terry Welbourne.

NOTES FROM INNISIDGEN, ST. MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY: 30TH MAY 1995 CE

This site is a magnificent place and the axis of the site centres around the huge north-eastern [capstone. The] material of the cairn is formidably high, over ten feet tall, and [it] has lost its large kerbstones to keep the monument in place, but the weight of this cairn material has caused some of them to be pushed outward. One of the kerbstones at the north is massively cupmarked. The passageway into the the distant horizon is at the bottom, the lintel at the top. Excavations at the north-east side took place in 1854, though it is unknown what degree of reconstruction was used here. The central cairn leads to three very substantial turfed cairn-causeways at the west-north-west, the south-east and the east. Their former use is unknown, but I'm sitting on a fallen stone at the beautifully sunny centre. The wind is blowing through the trees that were, as usual, planted to hide the stones about two centuries ago.

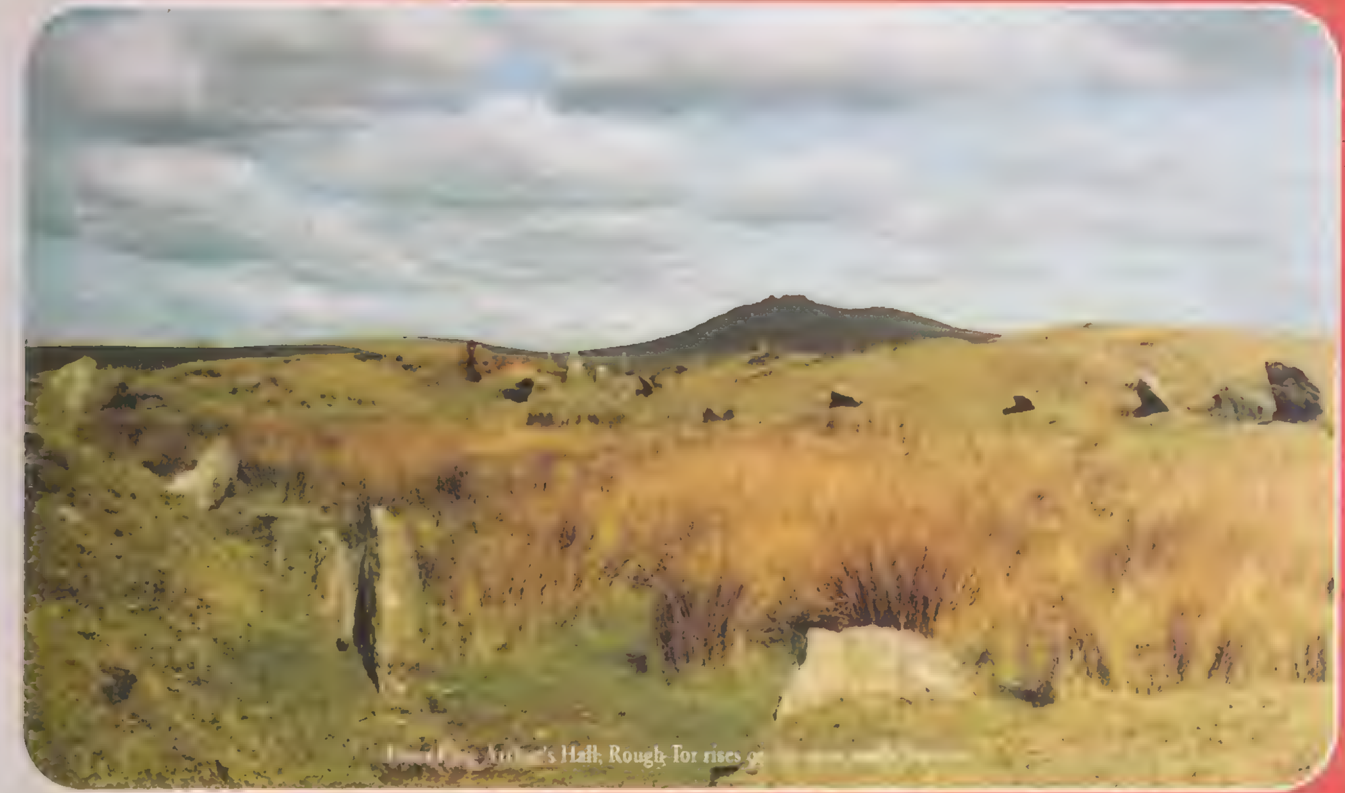
Innisidgen is important to Scillonian tourism and is marked on most good road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
200.129777

1 b) 6

King Arthur's Hall

On the western edge of Bodmin Moor, high on a windswept prehistoric ridgeway, stands the mysterious and confounding King Arthur's Hall. This great rectangular earthwork – wide open to the sky – is the only one of its kind in Britain. It is situated in a position of extremely wild beauty with breathtaking northern views up to Rough Tor^G and an ever-changing canopy of psychedelic weather. Archaeologists claim that the building of this monument was a greater undertaking than any other on Bodmin Moor, and, since 1584, when first mentioned by Norden the Antiquary, King Arthur's Hall has perplexed scholars and visionaries alike. William Borlase made a passing reference to it in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, commenting, 'Near by also, is Arthur's Hall, and whatever is great, and the use and Author unknown, is attributed to Arthur.' Even then, the enclosure was in a confused state but obviously of great antiquity. The earth-banks were originally over six feet high, with an inner kerbed wall of alternating large & small upright stones. There is no ditch at King Arthur's Hall, suggesting that the banking material was taken from local land clearance. There is a single entrance to the south-west and the structure is orientated north–south. The centre of the earthwork appears to be scooped, but it is a featureless quagmire in all but the driest weather and has never been excavated. But this is not important, as King Arthur's Hall stood at the heart of an important Neolithic ceremonial centre, on the prehistoric pathway to the settlement below Garrow Tor, just over a mile to the east, and within walking distance of four stone circles: the Trippet Stones, the Stripple Stones henge,^{G} Leaze and the now destroyed double circles on King Arthur's Down. This ease of access, combined with the conscious and probably symbolic decision to make the hall a shape other than circular, suggests that this may not have been a sacred precinct, but a later place of administration and discussion, similar to Crucuno Rectangle in Brittany and the Svarte Thing on the east coast of southern Sweden.


[illegible] Arthur's Hall; Rough Tor rises [illegible]

NOTES ON KING ARTHUR'S HALL, KING ARTHUR'S DOWNS, BODMIN MOOR: 28TH FEBRUARY 1995 CE (WRITING SLOWLY WITH GLOVED HANDS)

This place is a rare treat – an ancient rectangular henge-like enclosure with a kerbing on the inside of the bank and a flat area in the centre, now boggy and treacherous. King Arthur's Hall is a 'one-off' – in atmosphere, it reminds me of Arbor Low,^{G} high up on the moors ... a meeting place, a place of tribal gathering and perhaps of decision by elders... Now, it is much ruined. The mere mention of Arthur sends people running for their shovels and digging parties have been here in droves since its first mention in print in 1584, and before that I'll wager. Now, I must leave; my hands are too cold even for slow writing.

King Arthur's Hall stands in the middle of moorland, so an O.S. map is very necessary.

The Great Tomb on Porth Hellick Down

The whole of St. Mary's south-east coast is awash with antiquities. From the Giant's Castle which cuts off Salakee Down at the south up to the promontory of Gap Point at the east, there are cairns and chambers galore. Seven entrance graves remain in varying states of survival. They are best reached from the north along a footpath with a 240-degree horizon view, where six entrance graves stand close together in delightful dilapidation. Two of them were excavated by the Reverend Woodley around 1822, whilst 100 paces to the north stands the Great Tomb. This is regarded as the finest monument of its kind in the Scillies. The mound is a large platform-cairn with a diameter of twelve paces – formerly a kerb of retaining stones prevented the cairn from slipping, but the inner kerb still remains in place. There is an unusual curving passage around fourteen feet long, which leads through a very restricted entrance into a large chamber about ten feet long. Four massive great capstones make the roof. The Great Tomb was named by the archaeologist George Bonsor, who excavated in 1899. It was a typical Victorian event, which included removing all the capstones and examining the contents of the chambers – but only a few Bronze Age potshards were discovered. Unfortunately, earlier treasure-seekers had got there first and, luckily for the modern visitor, Bonsor managed to have the great capstones replaced as before.

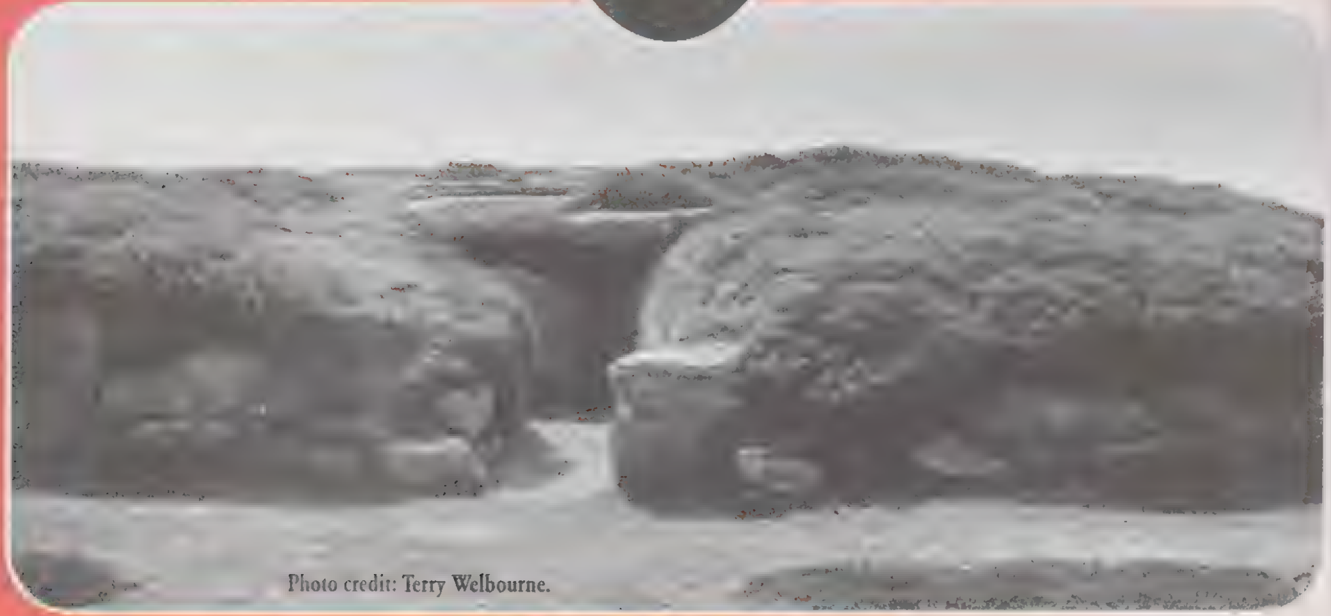


Photo credit: Terry Welbourne.

NOTES FROM PORTH HELLICK DOWN, ST. MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY: 29TH MAY 1995 CE

This site is not so visited – a motorcyclist came up soon, at which point we left and cycled down the R.V. used as a local country lane, and it is strange to watch the straight line before you when used to travelling in all kinds of serpentisms. A lost race of giants: Ancient Man saw the great rockpiles of the giant gods and in his small way sought to emulate them. My friend Doogie Scott would have a field day here – the Logan stone has huge cup-marks on it, the Devil's cup-marks perhaps? It's difficult to sit up here at all, the wind is up and doing its best to push me. And should it succeed, I would fall a very long way. But this is extreme pleasure, the Atlantic Ocean bordering my horizon on three sides out of four. On their own the stones are a monument of some beauty. We left with the intention of returning to further tidy up the place – and yesterday I spent an hour and a half with shears, rake and saw, tackling all the undesirable scrub from around the stones. The tree has grown into the notch where one upright supports the blocking stone.

Porth Hellick Down is important to Scillonian tourism and is marked on most road atlases, and is easily accessible on this tiny island.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
SEE BELOW

1 b) 8

Rough Tor, Showery Tor & Fernacre Stone Circle

Pronounced 'Rowter', to rhyme with Susan Powter. Just south of Camelford, slung across the north-west corner of Bodmin Moor, is the enormous ridge-backed citadel of Rough Tor, a natural rock-cut castle built by giants in some former age. Rough Tor is the second highest mountain in Cornwall, beaten only by its near neighbour around a quarter of a mile to the south-east, the ridiculously named Brown Willy. The great battlements at Rough Tor are piled up like megalithic dominoes, roughly shuffled then left long ago. This huge rock stack is the Mother's greatest balancing act. But the great jewel of Rough Tor is its Logan (pronounced 'Loggan') stone. This beautiful rocking stone is large enough to sit in and was placed at the very top of this heavenly scene by some magician of the very first race. Even on sunny windless days, the water in the Logan's natural basin is trapped behind ice. And the view from the great Logan stone is to see as a bird in flight. It was here ages later that megalithic Humanity came to gaze and to wonder, and eventually to copy. Glowering close by in the shadow of this formidable mountain is its smaller neighbour, Showery Tor. Here, in acts of great harmony, ancient Humanity piled a cairn of stones at the base of the huge natural rock pile. Then they built their settlements in the shadow of the gods. From the great Logan stone, a whole ruined Bronze Age village can be seen, snuggling into the wild unforgiving scenery. Just beyond is the great open ring of Fernacre, crouching low in its moorland grass. Fifty-two small stones of all shapes & sizes fill the circle, thirty-five of them are still standing. Some are drowning in their peaty surroundings, other smaller stragglers were never more than markers. Such is the nature of these large open rings – individual stones mean nothing. Indeed, these vast natural monuments surrounded by the Ancients' tiny works leave an overriding feeling of a community hopeful of the Goddess' good spirits, and of a time when the individual act really did mean nothing.

NOTES FROM THE FERNACRE STONE CIRCLE, AMIDST ANCIENT FIELDS AND BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENTS, LYING ON DAMP GROUND IN BLAZING SUN IN THE SHADOW OF ROUGH TOR: 27TH FEBRUARY 1993 CE

This moorland is peaceful today. The rage of the wind passes over my head as I lie face down and contemplate this place. In the shadow of the gods, the Ancients made their homes and here did they worship, too. Approaching Fernacre is apoplectically dramatic; it is over a mile from the nearest path, and that path is obscure and remote itself. A hard climb to the top of Rough Tor and there beneath is the Fernacre circle. Stannon^{G} and Fernacre are close together but such is the nature of the land that they are mutually exclusive. The stones of Fernacre are all low, none over three feet, most only pointy stumps but That's Not Important, for they define the sacred area. There is a low outlier to the east and round the horizon are five marker points of natural rock with placed boulders for astronomical ritual alignment. But it is the rock stacks of Rough Tor, with its two Logan stones, which brought the builders of Fernacre to this spot.

ROUGH TOR: 200.146809
SHOWERY TOR: 200.149813
FERNACRE: 200.145799

These sites require an O.S. map, plenty of time and patience.

1 b) 9

ORDNANCE SURVEY
200.126800

Stannon

There is an enormous low stone ring in the north-west corner of Bodmin Moor. It is called Stannon, and it sits on the north slope of Dinnever Hill, overlooked by a china clay works, a huge beast of a thing like a modern Iron Age hillfort. Due to the clever positioning of the circle, the messy clay works is easily forgotten as soon as Stannon comes into view. The moor road to the circle leads over Harpur's Down. It is slow and ever-climbing, but care must be taken to leave the feeling of towns behind, and this lonely place offers the hills, the sky and all that quiet meditation needs. Approaching from the moor road, an alignment of four small stones seems to invite the traveller in – and there suddenly is Stannon, on the near horizon, an impressive silhouette that gets smaller as it is approached. Though Stannon is a huge ring, forty-five yards across, the stones are tiny and there are over eighty of them. Sheep and wild horses roam around Dinnever Hill, and many bring their young to shelter within the stone circle – it seems to give them considerable sanctuary. Stannon has a sister circle just a mile to the east, but the fifty-two stones of Fernacre^{G} are surrounded by ancient settlement and the welcome shelter of Rough Tor^{G} and Brown Willy, the two biggest mountains in Cornwall. Stannon and Fernacre are entirely different from the other circles of Bodmin Moor, or anywhere else in Britain, for that matter. This may be due to a tendency to understatement on the part of the builders. The people of the Rough Tor settlement were obviously strong-willed and intelligent. From Stannon, the Mayday sun would have risen over Rough Tor and climbed high into the southern sky. Perhaps people with such capabilities had no need to impress themselves by erecting large stone monuments. They already lived in the shelter of these two huge sacred mountains and the outrageous rock idol of Showery Tor.^{G}

Stannon

Stannon, I look to your low stones' low tones as the sun dies
Stannon, I see all your stalagmite uprights at the sunrise
Watch for the signal at Rough Tor
Salute to the moon on the low moor
To Stannon return as from some shore
With a cosmos of dreams in your eyes
With a cosmos of dreams in your eyes.

(melodramatically)
Break for the hills
Make for Stannon
Can't forfeit love
If your spade
is facing
Down
+

EXTREME NOTES ON STANNON IN BLAZING BLUE SKY, SUN AND HIGH VELOCITY WIND, BODMIN MOOR, CORNWALL: 27TH FEBRUARY 1993 CE (MORNING)

As windswept a place as this I rarely have seen. Stannon is a lovely open ring looking out on to the barren moor, but its sights still reach back to the vegetation of the hills behind. I'm sitting with my back to the china clay works which should be offensive, but somehow is not (its earthworks approximating the walls of Old Sarum). In the distance, wild ponies make their way slowly across the moor whilst the low stones of Stannon remain as they have been since the Bronze Age. A mile to my left (east) the low uprights of Fernacre point towards the horizon, and cairns, low standing stones and general workings of the Ancients litter this barren moorland…

Stannon requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
200.(TRIPPET)131750/(STRIPPLE)143753

1 b) 10

Trippet Stones & the Stripple Stones

Bodmin Moor east of St. Breward roars with the echoes of the distant past. Close to the A30, and easily reached from the road that crosses Manor Common, are two important sites: the Trippet Stones circle and the battered but wondrous Stripple Stones henge, which stands far from the road in the shadow of Hawk's Tor. Scholars have argued about the relationship of the two monuments since they were first recorded in the mid-19th century. The Trippet Stones is a beautiful and regular Cornish circle, but far more ruinous than it appears. Luckily, the missing stones having been removed in equal amounts throughout the monument, the circle retains its elegant balance. There are now eight standing stones left, each one surrounded by particularly deep pools of water created by the cattle, who circle each stone using them as rubbing-posts. The inner face and top of each upright were smooth and placed with great care. Imagine the fabulous sight when all twenty-six original stones were in place. The Trippet Stones were 'discovered' in 1858, by John Thomas Blight, the most tragic figure in antiquarianism. Blight left us a fine illustration of the Trippet Stones, but was soon after committed to a long slow death at the Bodmin Asylum. The circle is sighted on the extraordinary Carbilly Tor, a wildly unnatural rockstack just to the north-east. This low outcrop looks like a giant's cromlech, and such is the positioning of the Trippet Stones that the midsummer sun sets right behind this sacred hill. To the north, the massifs of Rough Tor[G] and Brown Willy rear up behind the near horizon of Garrow Downs, from where the eyes are naturally directed east to Hawk's Tor. And it is this sacred hill on which the Stripple Stones are sighted.

A rugged stroll of just over a mile, through Hawk's Tor farm, keeping close to the field walls, is an effort well rewarded. But the Stripple Stones are a mess and nobody can deny it. This rare Neolithic circle-henge, the only one of its kind south of Avebury,[G] has been horribly mutilated in recent times. Fourteen of the twenty-eight stones have been removed for building purposes, and ten of those remaining have toppled over. Ploughing and cart-tracks, possibly following the original ancient pathway, have cut through the site, sending the earth-walls tumbling into the ditch. This has so blurred the sacred precinct that even the monument's excavator, Harold St. George Gray – famous for his early work with Keiller at Avebury – had notorious problems defining the original positions of both bank and ditch. As a final indignity, a large field wall was built through the south-east quadrant in 1885. All this has conspired to deaden the considerable physical impact of the Stripple Stones. But the henge was a ruin long before its discovery in 1879, and much of this is due to hasty construction on the part of its builders. The earthwork was created from soil piled over granite blocks, whilst the much larger than average stones were placed in very shallow holes. This was no masterful construction, and was possibly the work of newly-arrived settlers bringing their old traditions, but with all the style and none of the craftsmanship. Yet the power of the Stripple Stones remains in these extremely magical surroundings and as the centre stone is over twelve feet long, this recumbent when originally erect would have stood over eleven feet tall between the two closest uprights. Like Arbor Low,[G] the Stripple Stones henge would have been very impressive during its first period of worship. Set in the righteous shadow of Hawk's Tor, even if the site were ploughed and the stones removed, this sacred place would still reek with the effervescences that first drew ancient Humanity to it.

NOTES IN HIGH WINDS FROM THE RECUMBENT CENTRE STONE AT THE STRIPPLE STONES CIRCLE-HENGE, NEAR BLISLAND, BODMIN MOOR: 28TH FEBRUARY 1993 CE, LATE MORNING

Frost all around and a howling wind on this lonely moor this sunny Sunday, the last day of February. I expected nothing, as the great archaeologists stated that its importance was ruined by field walls that cut through the site and cart-tracks which had spread thin the banks of the henge itself. Yet this is all secondary to its Fine Position, high up and righteously placed to see all around the area, and in the slight shadow of Hawk's Tor 400 yards away. Only four uprights stand of a remaining fourteen stones. Yet this is a place of legendary importance and were the stones to be hauled away and the site ploughed under, still much magic would continue at this fine, fine place.

These sites require an O.S. map.

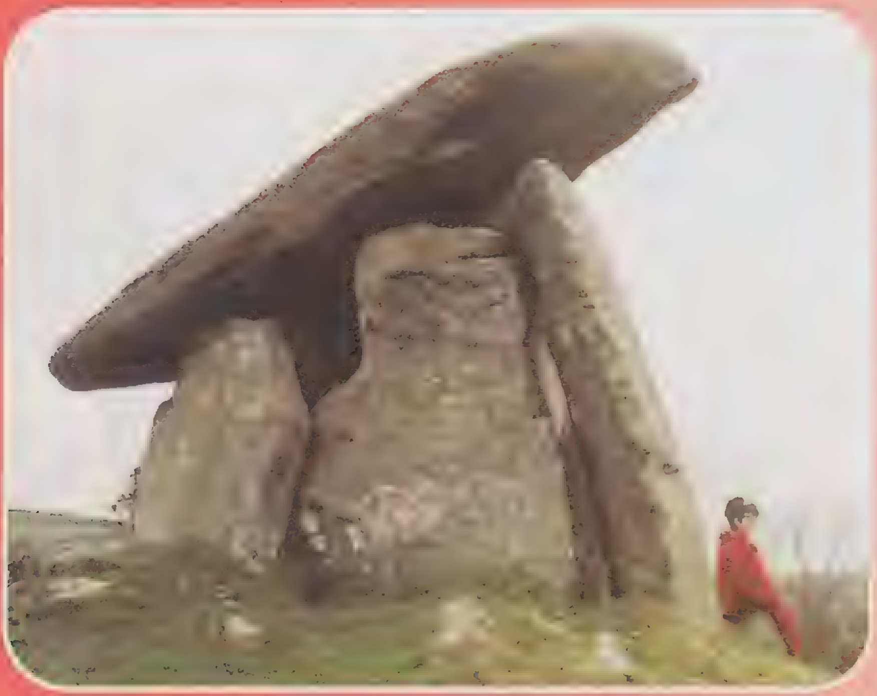
1 b) 11

ORDNANCE SURVEY
201.259688

Trethevy Quoit

Trethevy Quoit stands magnificent and dangerous, a megalithic behemoth jealously guarding its tiny lane. Though recorded in 1610, by Norden the Antiquary, it was over 300 years later that the first descriptions were written, and this must have been a terrifying place for those ancient travellers who knew nothing of it. The great quoit is awe-inspiring as it broods on its quiet field ridge, the capstone teetering at a supernatural angle, as though poised on its haunches ready to leap and attack. But to the south, the lowland views towards Liskeard are magnificent. Partly sheltering Trethevy from the lane, a row of cottages creates an unlikely and unconvincing domestic scene. Sometimes, longhorn cattle from the nearby farm clog the muddy tarmac, and the traveller often arrives at a slow walking pace.

It is surely this combination of the awesome and the everyday which makes Trethevy Quoit so magnificent. All the remaining Cornish quoits – Lanyon,[G] Chûn,[G] Mulfra[G] and Zennor,[G] are far to the south in the magic of the Land's End peninsula, high on moors and distant from civilisation. But as we travel north, the intensity of agriculture and the pressure of land development have accounted for the tragic destruction of Carwynnen Quoit, Lesquite Quoit and the Devil's Coyt at St. Columb Major – monuments which survived for thousands of years only to be used for field walls and road repairs in the 1800s. This leaves Trethevy as the sole keeper of the area's quoit tradition, a role which it performs magnificently. Though dolmens and cromlechs abound throughout Wales, Ireland and the west of England, there is none greater than Trethevy. Once, there was a small mound surrounding the quoit, probably only three or four feet high, so as not to challenge the aspirational and sky-rending uprights as they thrust the great captone aloft. A kerb of stones, now disappeared, defined the limits of the mound, and the entrance was made between the portal stones, through a narrow hole cut in the right side of the largest upright stone of the antechamber, a trait that the monument shares with Tinkinswood,[G] in S. Wales, and Little Kit's Coty,[G] in Kent. Around 1850, the backstone of the chamber fell, causing the extreme tilt of the capstone which we now see. Though this makes an impressive photograph, to stand under or behind the great chamber is to believe that the capstone will, at any moment, slither and crush the visitor, like a fly under a man's boots. Such is the granite drama of Trethevy Quoit.



NOTES FROM TRETHEVY QUOIT, NORTH OF LISKEARD, CORNWALL: AFTERNOON, 26TH MARCH 1992 CE

How does the capstone stay on? How much longer can it stay up? Trethevy Quoit is outrageous in its fifteen-and-a-half feet height, mainly because of the crazy lean of its huge capstone. If Lanyon Quoit is a horse in pastureland feeding, then Trethevy is a maverick, a rodeo horse triumphant at unseating its rider and rearing up on its hind legs in a display of sheer glee! It is artistic to a huge degree, as though some Bronze Age lunatic-genius saw beneath the barrow in a vision and then dug and dug and dug until there it was – as perfect a place of sculpture as ever was seen. *Crouching in the front chamber:* Seven megaliths create the horse for the capstone, though one has fallen and only three support the weight. The fallen upright has caused the capstone to slide and so precarious is it that Dorian refused to stand up under the monument. Truly, it will one day fall and my humanness keeps saying 'Could be this minute.' Today is a great day to see Trethevy. The wind is so blustery that I was blown from the gate 200 yards away as I tried to take a long distance shot, but now the sun is blinding in blue sky, though fifteen minutes ago it was all black and horribly aggressive. As I leave Trethevy Quoit, I kiss its capstone and pray that it never falls like its more southern neighbours at Mulfra and Zennor. Goodbye.

Trethevy stands in obscurity behind cottages in a field between Tremar and Darite, and needs an O.S. map.

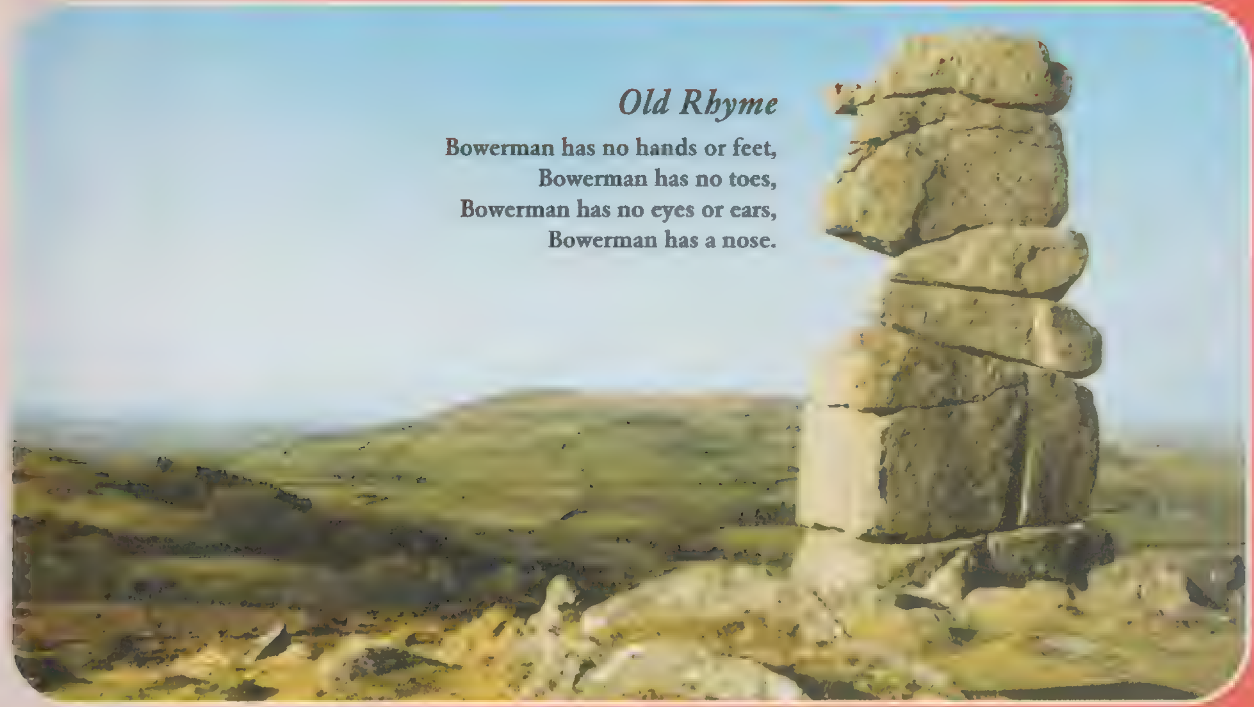
ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.742804

1 c) 1

Bowerman's Nose

This silent rock idol is cartoon-like from its northern side. He reminds me of Snoopy wearing a baseball cap. But as we pass Bowerman, his countenance changes to an Easter Island sentinel before returning to the familiar Roman nose that looks so much as though it should wear wire spectacles. Antiquaries of the 17th and 18th centuries were convinced that such monuments were built by the Druids, and rockstacks such as the Cheesewring[G] regularly featured in the books of such people as contemporary creations. Since 20th-century geology has shown that most of these stacks would have been created by erosion and Nature, it must be con-cluded that the hand of ancient Humanity still figured somewhere in the equation, for there is a meaning to Bowerman's Nose which appears to be beyond chance. I visited Bowerman's Nose with no preconceptions, but wrote on-site that the rockstacks all around the 'monument' had been 'systematically toppled until only the Bowerman and two or three other impressive balancing stones were left'. Other similar sites exist. Along the Gloucestershire Ridgeway stands the Devil's Chimney, that great monolithic stone stack which put the *llech** into Leckhampton Hill. Unlike Bowerman's Nose, the Devil's Chimney may have suffered no alterations what-soever, yet in its Ur state, still it remains an inspiration for future temple-builders. The Pulpit Rock rises rugged and altar-like out of the English Channel, hugging up close to the shore beyond Portland lighthouse in Dorset. These temples may be natural or partially carved and semi-rearranged, but they clearly inspired the Ancients to build their own stone temples. For further information, see Chapter 9 in main text, 'Proto-Neolithic Temples'.

* *llech* is Welsh for stone.



Old Rhyme

Bowerman has no hands or feet,
Bowerman has no toes,
Bowerman has no eyes or ears,
Bowerman has a nose.

SOME OBSERVATIONS AT BOWERMAN'S NOSE, DARTMOOR: 9TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

Bowerman's Nose is a rock idol. It is impossible to date but was created more through destruction than construction. I think that the rockstacks which lined the ridged spine of Hayne Down were systematically toppled until only the Bowerman and two or three other impressive balancing stones were left. This megalithic sculpture was impressive in that it revealed as it created and probably allowed valuable building stone for a temple. Today, such an air of perfection surrounds this high hilltop that I am in bliss! I can see all around this clear beauty of a day. And Great Hound Tor on the near horizon is impressive as forever in its metal gun-boat grey and Logan stone and rockstacks.

Bowerman's Nose requires an O.S. map.

1 c) 2

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.56.65

Brisworthy & Ringmoor Stone Circles

High on Ringmoor Down on the northern slopes of the Plym Valley stand the low but impressive stones of Ringmoor and Brisworthy. The latter circle is the first one encountered and is by far the most impressive. This twenty-five pace diameter circle was constructed of forty-two local granite standing stones, none larger than three-and-a-half feet tall. But the monument is overlooked by the remarkable Legis Tor and it is as part of a multi-proportional topographical event that the circle works best. The stones are graded towards the south, though the lack of size of these standing stones dramatically lessens the effect. The circle was excavated by the Reverend H. H. Breton, who re-erected some of the stones using sheer-legs. Up the hill just 300 yards is the stone circle and avenue of Ringmoor. The circle of low stones has had replacements in the recent past, probably in the 19th century, but the position of the 500-yard long stone row is mysterious as it eases across the moor, through a very ancient reeve, or Dartmoor earth-boundary, and other remains.

INSET: Ringmoor stone circle.

CLEAR DAY NOTES FROM RINGMOOR CIRCLES AND STONE ROW, DARTMOOR: 10TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

This is a perfect day high above the world, calm, dreamlike, with only very distant disruptions. The monuments on Ringmoor are left in peace most of the time and the tiny ruined stone-way leads to a lovely stone far out from its neighbours and knee deep in water. The peace up here is hard to describe – once the Ancients made their wild dances high on the moors and it is quite beautiful to see them still. Below me at Brisworthy circle the soft slope is snug in its hillside and facing off the powerful Legis Tor to the east. Ringmoor and Brisworthy are only 300 yards apart, likely used at similar times – yet Brisworthy appears to be of a different time. Perhaps I've become conditioned, yet Brisworthy is closer to the open Bodmin Moor circles like the Trippet Stones^{G} or even Dartmoor's Greywethers^{G} and Scorhill.^{G} Whatever, this fine and fabulous day at Brisworthy and walking the Ringmoor stone row is a major-league high.

Brisworthy is often marked on road atlases, three miles east of the A386, near Hoo Meavy. The monuments are on the north-east of the village, overlooking the river Plym. I needed an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
193.(DUMP)176040/(HART)180060

1 c) 3

Dumpdon & Hartridge

The visitor to the end of Hartridge will experience the same long south-westerly view through the Otter Gap to distant Dartmoor as the Ancients of the Bronze Age and before. Hartridge points south like a directional finger of land, with the sacred hill of Dumpdon just 600 yards away, hanging in space. At the head of Hartridge, the Ancients used to signal to their neighbours on Dartmoor and the village is still known as Beacon from those distant days. This is possibly the area of the Goddess Tar. The Otter Gap, in which Honiton was built, has a Cottarson farm and a Carpenter's Hill, but no places which precisely names Tar. There is, however, the case of Mohun's Ottery along the river in the lea of Hartridge, under half a mile from the Beacon head.

'…Hartridge is so aptly named. At the ridge's end, a gaping hart stared at me, so I sang to it for five minutes, hoping to will it closer.'

From Hartridge, the Ancients lit beacon fires to communicate with their neighbours on Dartmoor.

DUMPDON AND HARTRIDGE NOTES, FROM A THICKET IN WEIRD WEATHER, DEVON: 31ST MAY 1996 CE

Rising up as a pair of sibling hills, these two great landmarks provided incredible atmosphere and inspiration for ancient Man. Those coming inland from Dartmoor would pass through the great Otter Gap at Honiton and carry on always in the lea of these great mountains. The weather is so shitty right now that I shall have to leave, but Hartridge is so aptly named. At the ridge's end, a gaping hart stared at me, so I sang to it for five minutes, hoping to will it closer. It didn't work, but pushed this magical land even further into delightful myth. NB Village below is called Beacon. Aha!

Drive to the village of Beacon, off the A30 north of Honiton. Dumpdon will be rising to the south, whilst you will actually be on Hartridge. Climb high up Hartridge to get the best views to Dartmoor.

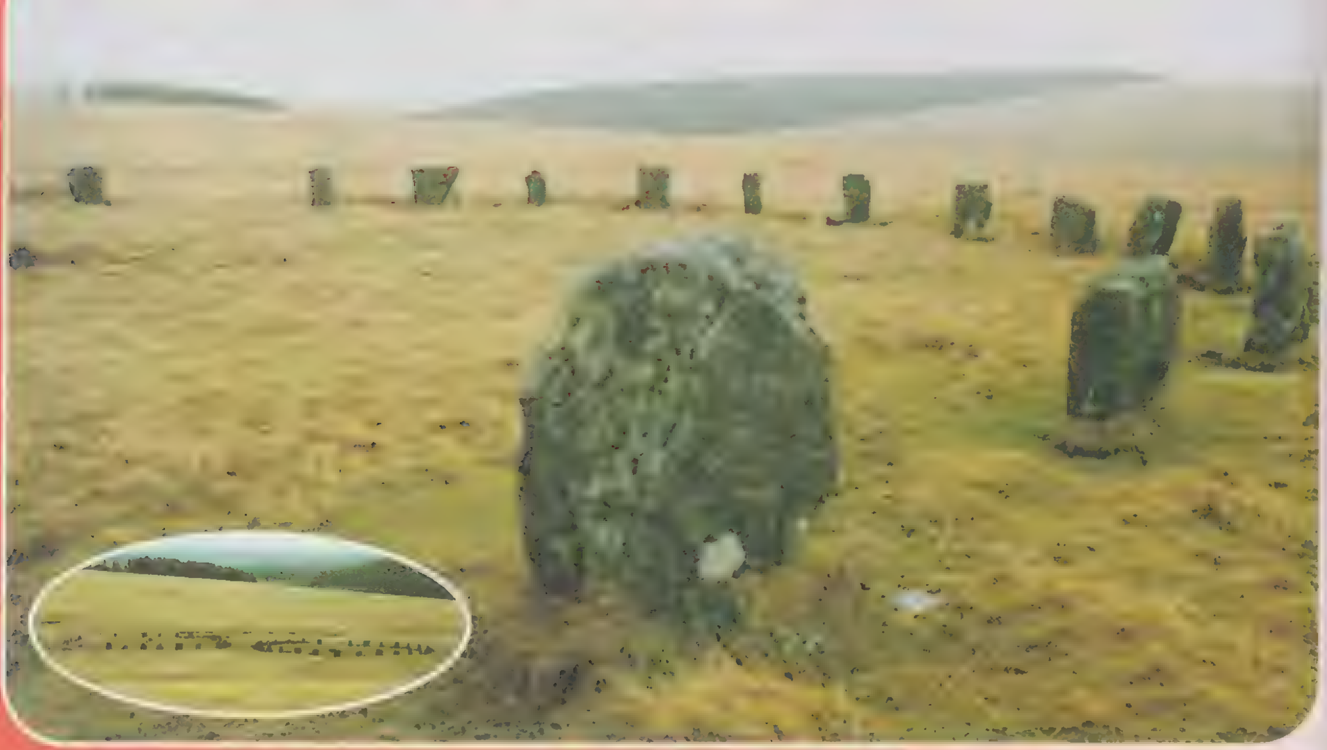
1 c) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.(GREY)628831/(FERN)655841

The Greywethers & Fernworthy

These two stone circles have entirely differing outlooks, despite the fact that their routes are interconnected. The traveller first arrives at the tiny stone circle of Fernworthy, with its unnatural new wooded surroundings and the recent Fernworthy reservoir just a few hundred yards away. Also known as Froggymead, the Fernworthy circle is a twenty-yard diameter circle of small-looking stones, though the largest one is actually four feet tall. Carry on through the Fernworthy Forest out onto the wilds of Great Varracombe, then walk towards the mountainous rocky outcrop of Sittaford Tor, in whose lea the two stone circles known as the Greywethers are situated. These two remarkable circles stand on an almost north–south alignment in a pass between the hills, and Aubrey Burl has suggested that they functioned as assembly points between the communities. The stones were excavated in 1898 and some of their tumbled stones were re-erected. They came from that high crystalline granite outcrop upon Sittaford Tor. In 1879, W. C. Lukis surveyed the sites in their pre-erected state and Alexander Thom has surveyed them since. All surveys have shown a discrepancy in size, suggesting that the re-erecting of stones was perhaps too casual, though complete they present a magnificent monument.

Two views of the Greywethers.



WET NOTES/EXHILARATION NOTES AT THE GREYWETHERS STONE CIRCLES, DARTMOOR: 8TH FEBRUARY 1996 CE, 11 A.M.

Two wonderful circles restored but abandoned at the eastern edge of Dartmoor ... all around the desolation of this high Pagan beauty. The walk to the Greywethers is everything, and the arrival so worthwhile. I was greeted by a rainbow as I left the forest and cut across over the moor. Now, the wind is whipping across me as I sit with my back to the largest flattest stone in the north circle. Like a perfect and unadulterated Hurlers,[G] these two circles are wild and daunting, but they lack the Hurlers' malevolence. Above me, the blurred sun tries to peep out of its banks of cloud as more massifs of Zeppelin formation threaten to blow me off the hillside. But this place is a magnificent hang-out. Sittaford Tor above me is strewn around like some ancient giant's temple ruined in medieval times... The Greywethers are a lonely masterpiece...

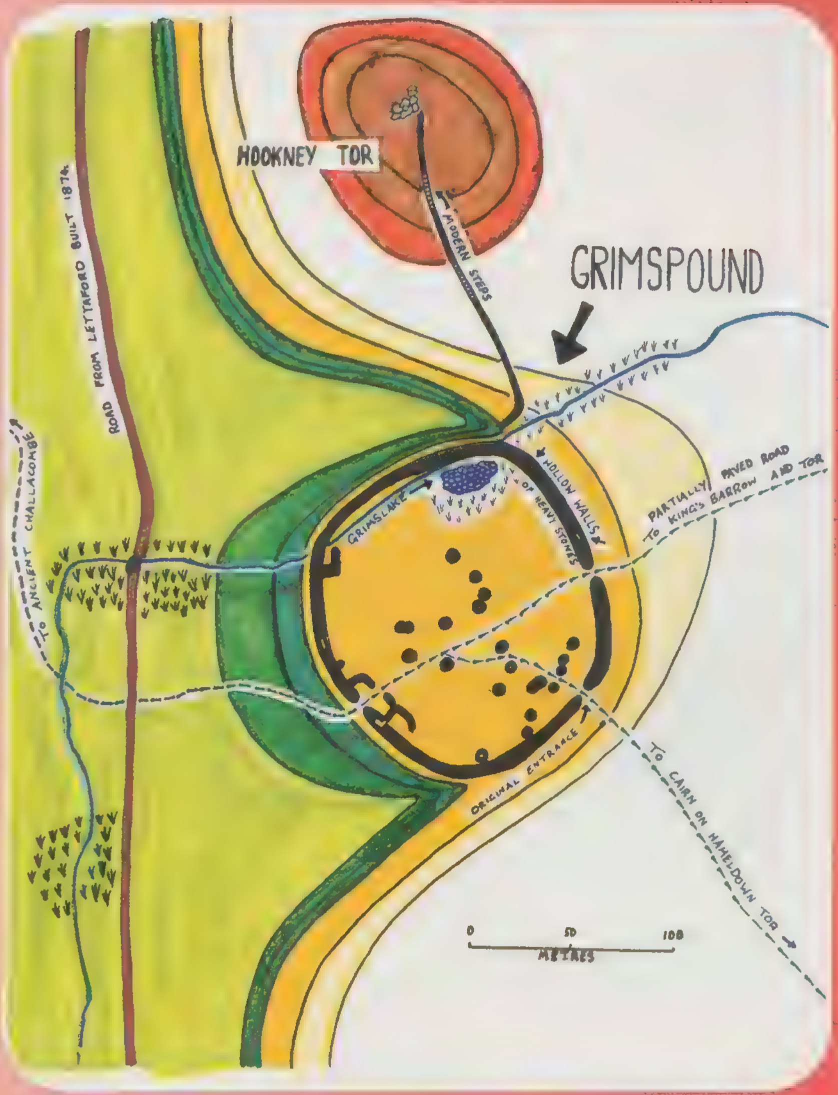
These sites are a trek, and require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.701809

1 c) 5

Grimspound & Hookney Tor

Grimspound is a great Bronze Age ring, a settlement of battered walls slung between two large hills, one an epic citadel of a thing called Hookney Tor. This huge mountain stronghold at Grimspound still retains its hold on the scenery, its lilac browns serving to contrast the rock of the fortress even in the streaming Dartmoor rain. At the overlooking precipice of Hookney Tor, modern boulder and red ash are quite poorly used to fill dangerous areas of the narrow worn stones. They detract from the overall look but so grand is the entrance up the steep slope to the Tor that nothing subdues the traveller. If these high places were once considered to have been inhabited by the Nature spirits who so terrified the Ancients, it is likely that the great rockstacks were seen as natural idols, invested with great power. Perhaps the building of the Greywethers stone circles[G] using parts of the ancient Sittaford Tor, above the circles, was a method of including and diffusing the powers of the old deities. Legend has it that Grimspound was the work of a dwarf called Grimgie and his labourers, who were tinners, though Grim is a generic name for Death – the Grim Reaper. Grimgie had promised them all a fine place to live on Dartmoor, but things were much harder than they had anticipated and no work was forthcoming. To ap-pease his unhappy men, Grimgie would fly into Widecombe to buy them all dainty treats, until the men, in their idleness for lack of tin to stream, set to work and within the passing of one afternoon had built the great enclosure at Grimspound.


HOOKNEY TOR
GRIMSPOUND
MODERN STEPS
ROAD FROM LETTAFORD BUILT 1874
TO ANCIENT CHALLACOMBE
GRIMSLAKE
HOLLOW WALLS OF HEAVY STONES
PARTIALLY PAVED ROAD TO KING'S BARROW AND TOR
ORIGINAL ENTRANCE
TO CAIRN ON HAMELDOWN TOR
0
50
100
METRES

GRIM NOTES AT GRIMSPOUND IN RAIN: 10TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

Imagine ancient travellers arriving at Grimspound, but coming downhill from over the moor to the east, the great citadel on Hookney Tor high above to the north, dotted with lookouts and linked by the causeway. Imagine the women at the water – the fast-flowing stream at the northern edge of the huge circle. The water runs right through the settlement. And mighty it is, too. Today, I expected nothing so alive or so full of the ancient past as this. This place reeks of the elements bursting forth. I'm sitting at the edge of the south gate looking up at the great Hookney Tor citadel. Here, the walls are high and the importance of the mountains in the relationship to the settlement reminds me of Mycenae. Now, a full downpour is wetting my paper too much and I must leave this note-taking…

Grimspound is on many road atlases. But if not, in the labyrinth of lanes, an O.S. map will be essential.

1 c) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
193.113031

Hembury

'This must be considered the most important site in Devon.'

NICHOLAS THOMAS, *PREHISTORIC ENGLAND*

Like a great phallus of land, or a finger pointing south between the low villages of Broadhembury and Woolvastone, the spur at whose end Hembury sits points like a directional arrow down the Otter Valley, parallel with the huge north–south spine which follows that river's valley for many miles. This large earthwork was only understood to have been a Neolithic causewayed enclosure upon its excavation. In 1930, Miss Dorothy Liddell undertook the first of five years of work there. Her team discovered a massive concentration of deep pits, built in the traditional Neolithic flat-floored style, many over seven feet deep. Also discovered were several structural features for baking, and kitchen implements, also the remains of wheat and barley. The team also excavated the flooring of a rectangular timber building. In his book *Causewayed Enclosures*, Roger Mercer has suggested that Hembury was part of a Neolithic axe trade which took in the causewayed enclosures at Hambledon Hill and Maiden Castle^{G} in Dorset, and Carn Brea and Helman Tor in Cornwall. Of further interest is Hembury's Neolithic pottery, which has a possible Breton provenance, certainly in the influence of its styling. But such was the position of Hembury that such major routes as the pass through the Honiton gap ensured Hembury's villagers a place at the hub of Neolithic trade and thought. Finds from Hembury are on display at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter.

My friend, the designer Jane Stevenson, photographed this Hembury panorama.

HEMBURY NOTES WITH IMPENDING RAIN, DEVON: 31ST MAY 1996 CE

As the first light drops fall, I've run to the shelter of the trees. Across the moors from the west comes a huge single sheet of blackest cloud. Now the pitter patter is a rhythmic sound and droplets spatter my notebook as I write crouched and hot in the May rain. The last day of May, as I sit in the causewayed enclosure with its endless carpet of lilac and fury of trees, so thick in places that the huge Iron Age fortifications concede defeat and give the impression of being naturally created. In *Prehistoric England*, Nicholas Thomas called Hembury 'the most important prehistoric site in Devon'. Certainly the Hembury siting is right on the edge of the vast land of sacred mountains to the east. Hembury also overlooks disturbing neighbours. The Dartmoor plateau rises so ominously to the west, whilst the south-east view looks to the four-mile-long massif of East Hill, a black ridgeway of infinity along its spine. But Hembury is a place to see on a fine, fine day, when the minimal views, disturbed by trees, can deliver their awesome impact.

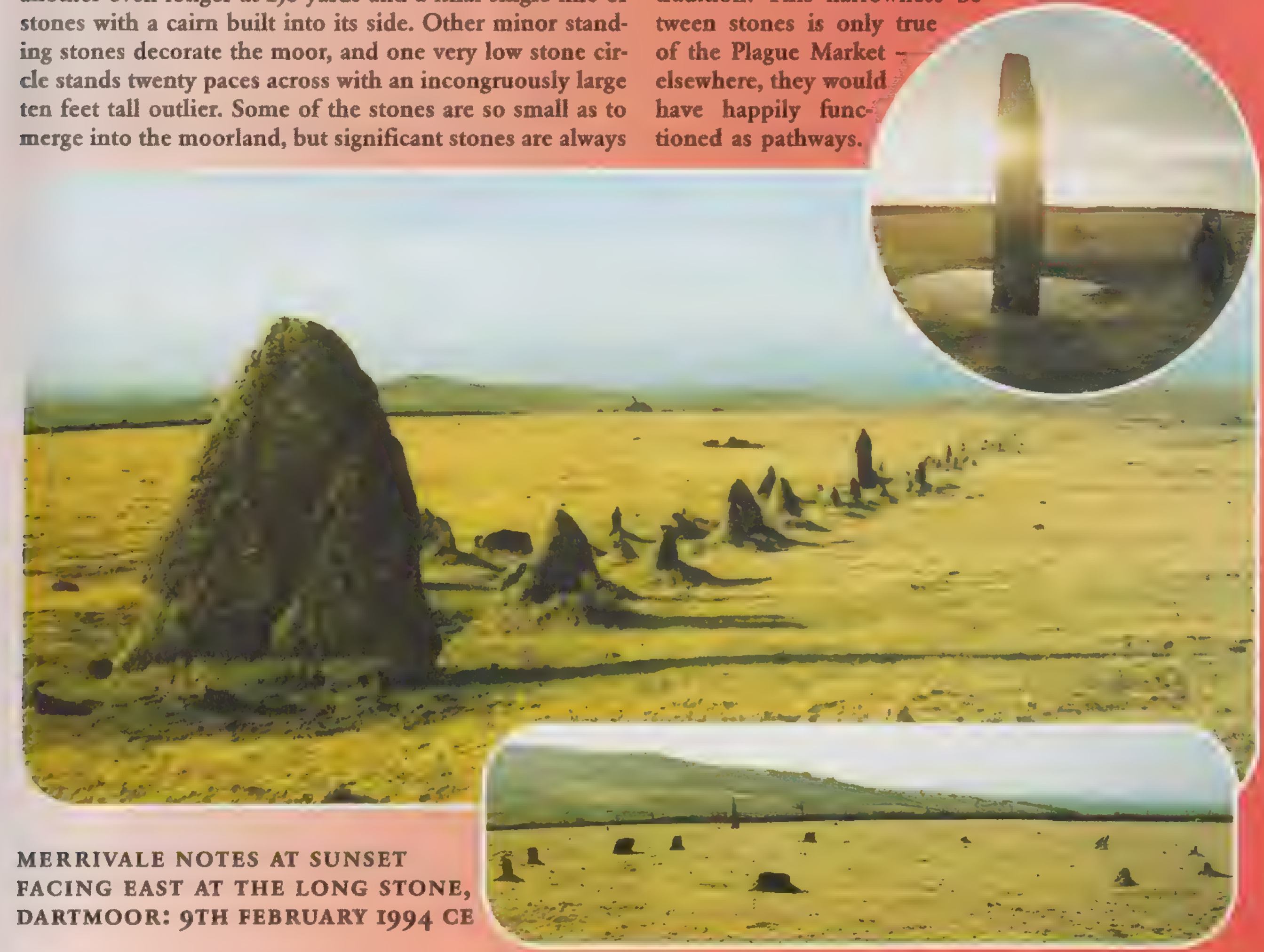
Hembury stands on the river Dart north of Buckfastleigh. It is marked on most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.55.74.

1 c) 7

The Plague Market at Merrivale

The long low stone rows of Merrivale have been known as the Plague Market since the Great Plague decimated the countryside in the middle of the 17th century. For it was to the stone rows of Merrivale that the healthy would bring food for the poor banished plague victims out on the moor. At Merrivale, three lines of standing stones march across the moor, a long double row about 200 yards long, another even longer at 250 yards and a final single line of stones with a cairn built into its side. Other minor standing stones decorate the moor, and one very low stone circle stands twenty paces across with an incongruously large ten feet tall outlier. Some of the stones are so small as to merge into the moorland, but significant stones are always placed at the conclusion of each row, one particularly large triangular stone being used as a 'blocking stone' at the east-south-east end of the larger of the main stone rows. Early theorists considered the stones to have been ceremonial pathways, but one antiquary suggested that the stones were too narrow for people to walk between and that the stone rows were made merely because it was tradition! This narrowness between stones is only true of the Plague Market – elsewhere, they would have happily functioned as pathways.



MERRIVALE NOTES AT SUNSET FACING EAST AT THE LONG STONE, DARTMOOR: 9TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

Somehow, the tranquillity of Merrivale is not too disturbed by the traffic over the moor. It is a wonderful place, this level plateau that slopes away to the south – surrounded on five sides by tors (and one pylon unfortunately). The best parts of the complex are the two rows of double stones west facing and linear to all intents. Then slung southwards on the slope is a tall longstone of about ten feet in height and a large open circle of small stones. All around this place, the shadows are falling, the sheep grazing and the family and friends dancing. These Dartmoor complexes are like large family sites. They give off evidence of wild excitement and stimulation and physical consummation. The large stone menhir in the presence of other such small avenue and stone circle stones does suggest some kind of phallic cult.

From Tavistock, take the B3357 Two Bridges road to Merrivale. Continue through the village and the road rises up onto a plateau – the stone rows and other monuments are here.

1 c) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.654874

Scorhill

Pronounced 'Scorral'. This bizarre beauty stands rooted at the eastern edge of Dartmoor, looking down on Gidleigh Common, marvellously removed from civilisation though only yards from the narrow fastness of the trackway. The stones of Scorhill stand above the North Teign river, described, in 1848, by the Reverend Samuel Rowe as 'the sacred circle of Scorhill ... by far the finest example of this rude kind of relic in Devonshire'. The name Scorhill is probably a contraction of 'as Koeur Hill' and the circle began as a monument of around seventy stones. But nowadays a circle of thirty-four stones survives, twenty-five of them still standing. The tallest stone of the circle is over eight feet in height, but it is the alien 'stalagmite' qualities of these stones which make then all seem so dramatic. In his *Stones of Dartmoor*, the antiquary William Crossing wrote: 'Not far from that stream [the North Teign] and the Walla Brook, is the fine Scorhill Circle. This is a good example of this class of monument, notwithstading that it has suffered at the hands of the despoiler. It is not so very long since that one of the stones was split, apparently to form gateposts, but attention being drawn to the matter its removal was prevented.'

HAPPY NOTES AT SCORHILL STONES, DARTMOOR: 7TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

Scorhill stands on a hillside facing into the wilderness of Dartmoor, an unassuming group of stones, in size, shape and position, yet collectively they present a beautiful circle. Today, the February sky is clear and clouds zoom across the peripheries of the horizon. As I climbed the hill from the east, a huge graft of low fog banked across the circle and dumped gentle rain on us, though on all sides was blue sky. Then a full rainbow appeared to the north of the hill and the ghost cloud disappeared. Dartmoor's rugged tors dot the horizon, and the great circle with its low stones and single seven-foot standing stone demurs to the rest of the features of the moor. Ancient Man was seeking harmony here and surely he did reconcile all sides. Scorhill is a ragged treat.

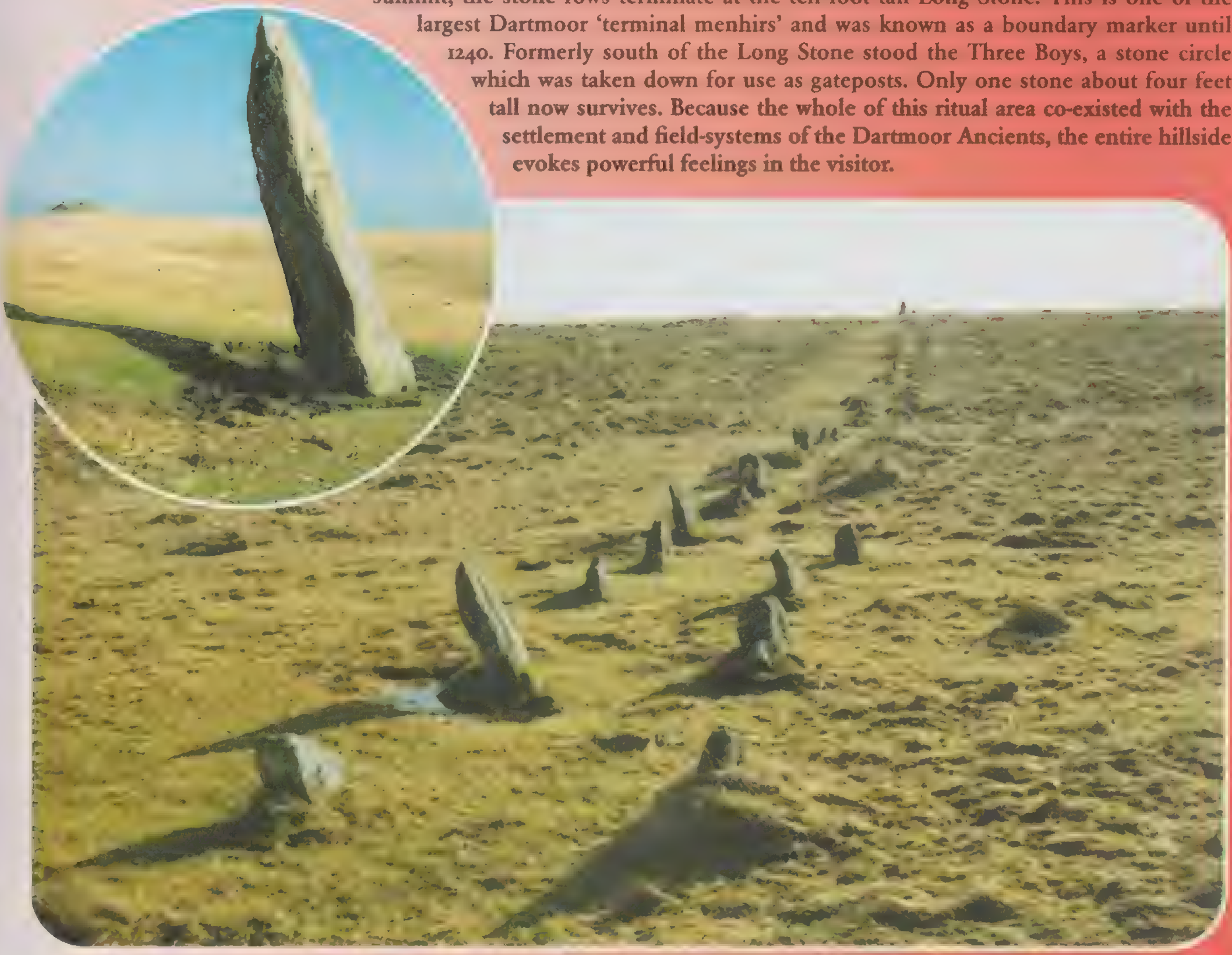
Scorhill's location on the high east of Dartmoor is obscure and needs an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.660860

1 c) 9

Shovel Down & the Long Stone

High on the southern slopes of Shovel Down, a great upside-down megalithic Y-shape of small stone rows cascades down the slopes of the hill towards the rushing torrents of the North Teign. The single trunk of the 'Y' is around 100 yards long, whilst the two 'arms' are each around 150 yards long. On top of the hill, beyond the immediate summit, the stone rows terminate at the ten foot tall Long Stone. This is one of the largest Dartmoor 'terminal menhirs' and was known as a boundary marker until 1240. Formerly south of the Long Stone stood the Three Boys, a stone circle which was taken down for use as gateposts. Only one stone about four feet tall now survives. Because the whole of this ritual area co-existed with the settlement and field-systems of the Dartmoor Ancients, the entire hillside evokes powerful feelings in the visitor.



TRIPPED OUT NOTES FROM THE LONG STONE, SHOVEL DOWN, DARTMOOR: 9TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

Noonish: Curiouser and curiouser. The bright sunlight and windlessness have brought an absolute peace to this wild monument of pathways and focal points and altars. Here at the great Long Stone, I'm bewildered by the great minds who chose to litter this mountain top with great rows of tiny double-lines of stones only eighteen to twenty-four inches tall and punctuated with cairns. Yet here is an enormous leaning pillar at least ten feet tall. Sadly, the avenues are horribly depleted, used for field walls and long trashed. But Shovel Down is extra-special, a divine gift to Dartmoor... *A half-hour later*: There are stone rows running off all over this part of the moor, in varying states of dilapidation. Also, a tiny circle is situated at the point where the lower stone row ends up the hill. Over the hill to the west is a settlement and the most fabulous views.

1 c) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
191.700908

The Spinsters' Rock

In an empty field, on a gentle slope looking out towards the agriculture of eastern Dartmoor, stands the beautiful Spinsters' Rock, the lone remaining monument of this once highly sacred Neolithic area. A large megalithic complex once extended across the road which passes the Spinsters' Rock, and appears to have included several rows of small stones orientated in a manner quite unlike the endless lines of Dartmoor stones to the east. The discovery of this large complex of stones explains the village name Drewsteinton, which means transliterally 'farm at the Druid's stones'. In 1778, the then still complete sacred precinct at Spinsters' Rock was the subject of the first essay on archaeo-astronomy by the remarkable antiquary William Chapple. Though his book was unpublished, Chapple's work remains vital, for it was soon after his extensive research that the stone avenues were cleared in readiness for agriculture. It was only William Chapple's work which enabled the late 19th-century antiquary G. W. Ormerod to reconstruct the ground plan of this intriguing stone shape, which appears to have been designed around a cruciform. G. W. Ormerod proved even more vital to the life of the Spinsters' Rock after a great storm in 1862, which brought the dolmen crashing down. Luckily, Ormerod had made detailed sketches in 1858, using a camera lucida, which enabled the artist to make outlines of objects using the correct perspectives. The rebuilding of the Spinsters' Rock took place in the November of the year of its fall, 1862, and it was replaced in its exact original form. This was by no means an easy task, for this large classic dolmen has tall uprights, the largest being over nine feet, whilst the capstone weighs over sixteen tons. Legend has it that the Spinsters' Rock was originally erected overnight by three witches and, as such, is a monument forever associated with the old religion. Evidence of three witches in a site's legend is often merely an early Christian attempt to demonise the even earlier Triple Goddess of the site. This was especially seen in the 7th century after Christ, when Churchmen were doing their best to curtail millennia-long activity at these venerated Stone Age sites.

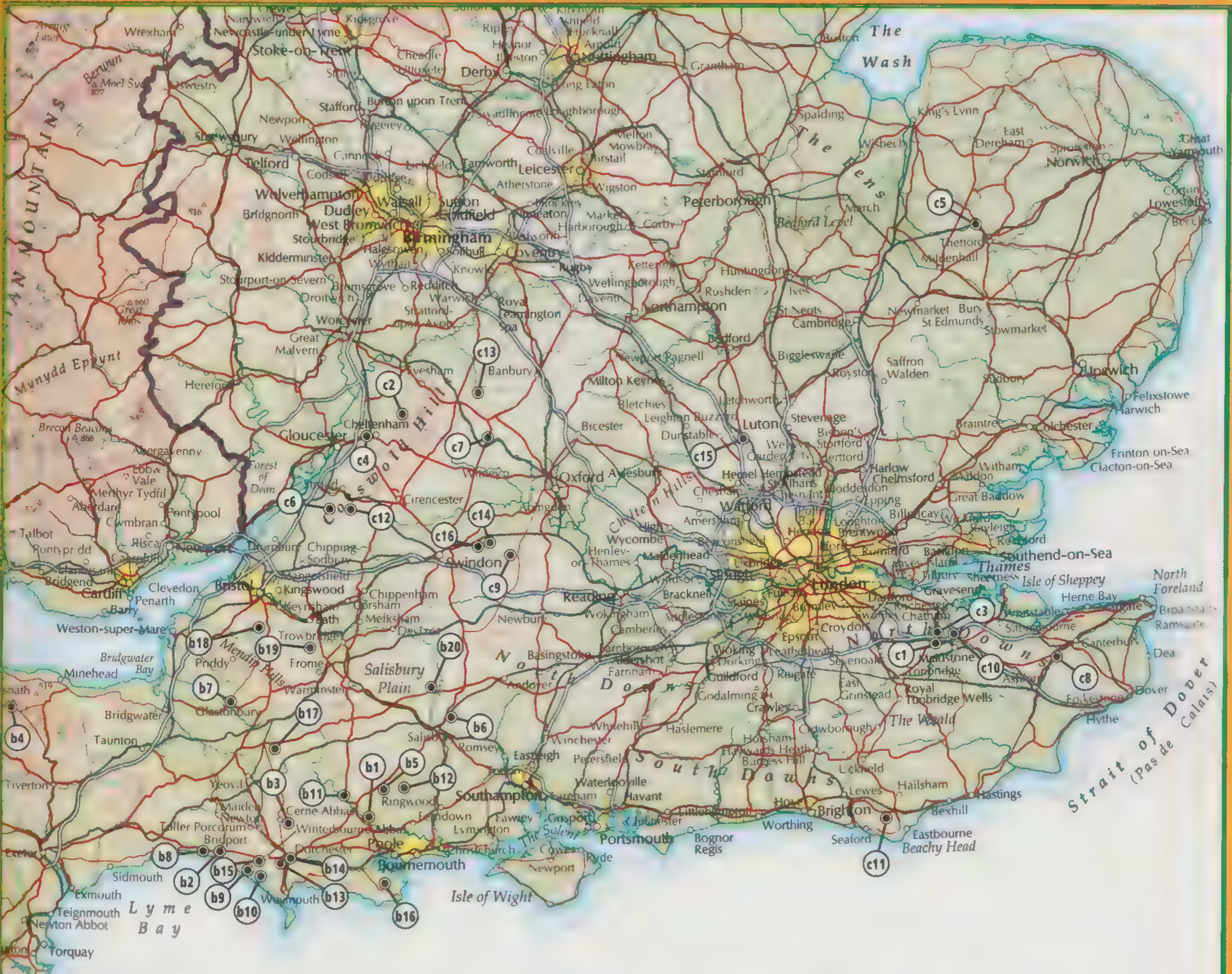
RAINBOW NOTES FROM THE SPINSTERS' ROCK, NEAR DREWSTEINTON, DEVON: 7TH FEBRUARY 1994 CE

We're here today with Lisa and Kentucky Jim (Bennett), greeted by another rainbow, as complete as the one that greeted our arrival at Scorhill this morning. This cromlech is a fabulous shape, finely balanced on its three uprights, the Drewsteinton cromlech is as classic as Lanyon Quoit[G] or Carreg Samson[G] in West Wales. This day is glorious – great wallops of ice-cream clouds loom over the horizon, but soon they are gone and the slow sun screams out from behind the clouds, as smiling as this scene down here on Mother Earth. I am transported by this place – all cares go to the wall when I see a great cromlech. It is as though some great ancient artist discovered a yet older tomb vandalised and wrecked. Then, like a sculptor uncovers his statue from within the granite, so the great artist uncovered his great work of art piece by piece from the broken remains of some previous temple. But principally, the great Spinsters' Rock is an almighty hang-out. Only the farm road, the cuckoo song in the trees, the birds singing, the distant tractor and the miniature pony twenty yards away are signs of life in this idyllic field.

The Spinsters' Rock is sited just outside Drewsteinton, close to the A382, and is marked on most road atlases.

two

Southern England



The Wash
The Fens
Bedford Level
Cotswold Hills
Chiltern Hills
Salisbury Plain
Mendip Hills
North Downs
South Downs
The Weald
Thames
Isle of Sheppey
North Foreland
Strait of Dover (Pas de Calais)
Isle of Wight
Lyme Bay
Forest of Dean
Mynydd Epynt
Brecon Beacons
Birmingham
London
Bristol
Oxford
Reading
Southampton
Portsmouth
Bournemouth
Brighton
Cambridge
Norwich
Ipswich
Gloucester
Cheltenham
Swindon
Salisbury
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Cardiff
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Key to sites

b1 BADBURY RINGS
b2 BRIDPORT, ABBOTSBURY & THE SWANNERY
b3 CERNE ABBAS GIANT
b4 COW CASTLE
b5 DORSET CURSUS & ACKLING DYKE
b6 FIGSBURY RING
b7 GLASTONBURY TOR
b8 GOLDEN CAP & EGGARDUN
b9 THE GREY MARE & HER COLTS
b10 THE HELLSTONE & THE VALLEY OF STONES
b11 HAMBLEDON AND HOD HILL
b12 KNOWLTON HENGES
b13 MAIDEN CASTLE
b14 MAUMBURY RING & MT PLEASANT
b15 NINE STONES OF WINTERBOURNE ABBAS
b16 ISLE OF PURBECK
b17 SOUTH CADBURY CASTLE
b18 THE WEDDINGS AT STANTON DREW
b19 STONEY LITTLETON
b20 STONEHENGE & ITS ENVIRONS
c1 ADDINGTON & THE CHESTNUT
c2 BELAS KNAP
c3 COLDRUM
c4 COLD SLAD
c5 GRIMES GRAVES
c6 HETTY PEGLER'S TUMP
c7 THE HOAR STONE & LYNEHAM LONGBARROW
c8 JULIEBERRIES GRAVE
c9 LAMBOURN SEVENBARROWS
c10 LITTLE KIT'S COTY
c11 LONG MAN OF WILMINGTON
c12 LONGSTONE OF MINCHINHAMPTON
c13 ROLLRIGHT STONES
c14 UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE
c15 WAULUD'S BANK & THE FIVE KNOLLS
c16 WAYLAND'S SMITHY

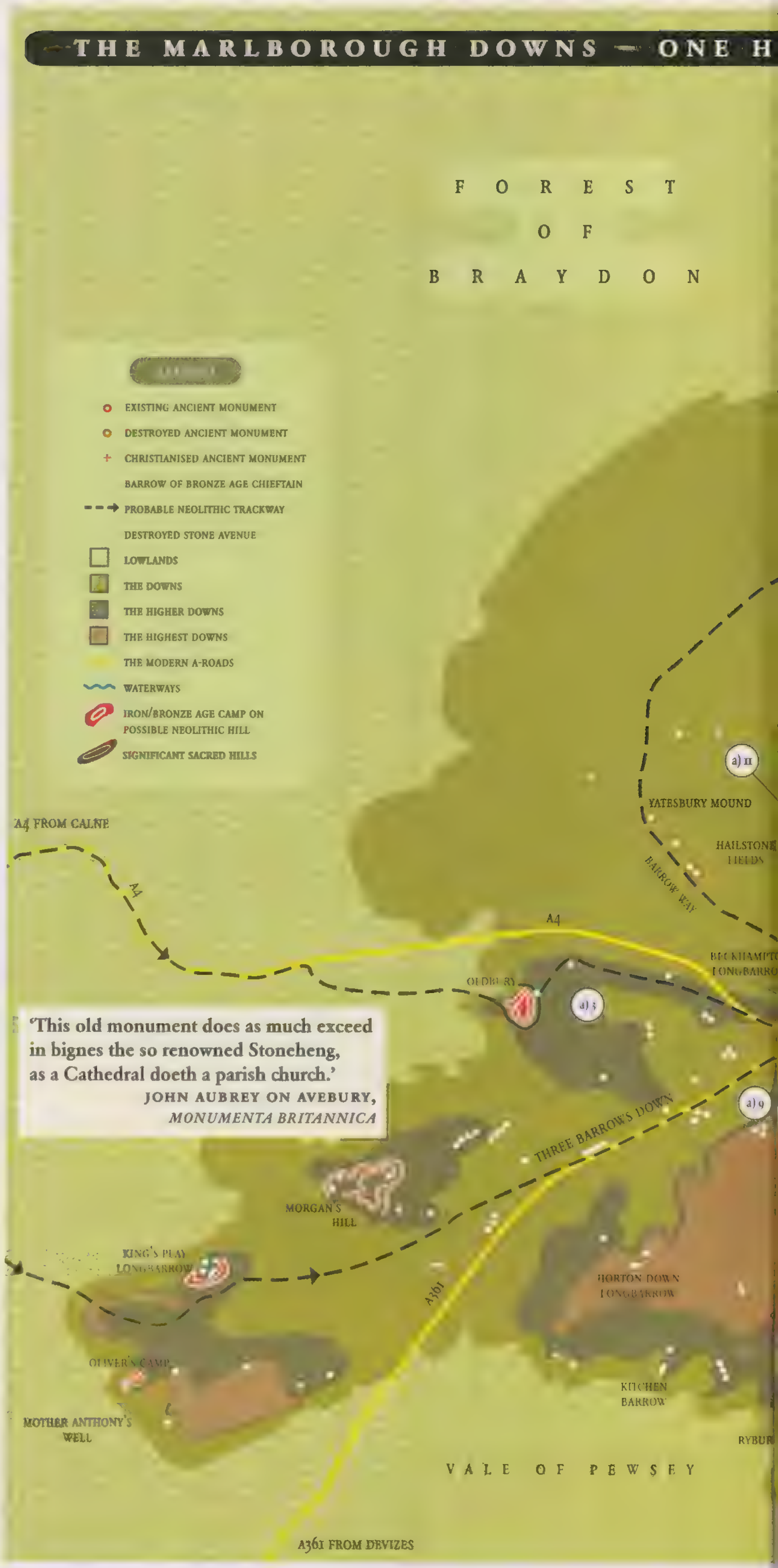
THE CEREMONIAL TRACKWAYS OF KENNET

As master psychologists in the planning of ritual and pilgrimage, the Neolithics were capable of turning these great ceremonial centres into mind maps where the great weight of participants was used to reflect glory to each one. For example, travellers down the Ridgeway from the north would have been mystified and intrigued by the lines of pilgrims crossing the dorsal track from Cherhill Down into Avebury. The Cherhill walkers would have felt the same way, and each reflected the glory of the other as they made their way across the sacred landscape.

FROM THE NORTH – THE SILBURY GAME

As the prepared walker comes down the Ridgeway south of Barbury Castle, they will be able to see a startling phenomenon; Silbury appears to ride on the back of Waden Hill as the traveller walks south. Even though Waden Hill is only a half mile in length, its peculiarly obtuse angle of orientation towards the Ridgeway means that this tricky Silbury phenomenon works all the way down to the Sanctuary, where the whole hill is revealed for the first time. Imagine the Neolithic Silbury, then pure white chalk, gliding sunrise-like along the Waden back. Travellers for the great ceremonies would be in total awe for the last forty-five minutes of the pilgrimage. And at the psychological beginning of the complex, the Sanctuary, there would be revealed the greatest construction any Neolithic traveller could ever see. On Rough Hill, a bridleway down to the Anglo-Saxon herepath suggests its roots may also be late Neolithic; it is built on the north side of the hill, enabling the Silbury Game to be played. Bronze Age barrow clusters along this ridge suggest that the ceremonials continued in earnest, and the preponderance of white barrows between the Ridgeway and Waden Hill suggests that the Game had become even stranger by the Bronze Age. The white barrows are placed in such a way as to be level with Silbury, though they are really on the same shelf as the Ridgeway. The effect is to create about fifteen barrows on the horizon, only one of which moves to the left as you walk. As the ceremonial system expanded, the architects of Avebury were forced to construct more ceremonial pathways. Perhaps even the herepath from Wroughton (the former Ellandun) to Overton was utilised from a former Neolithic ceremonial trackway. Others have commented on the shock of Silbury's rising coming up the herepath from Winterbourne Monkton.

(RIDGEWAY DISCOVERIES NORTH OF THE SANCTUARY: 25TH JUNE 1995 CE)

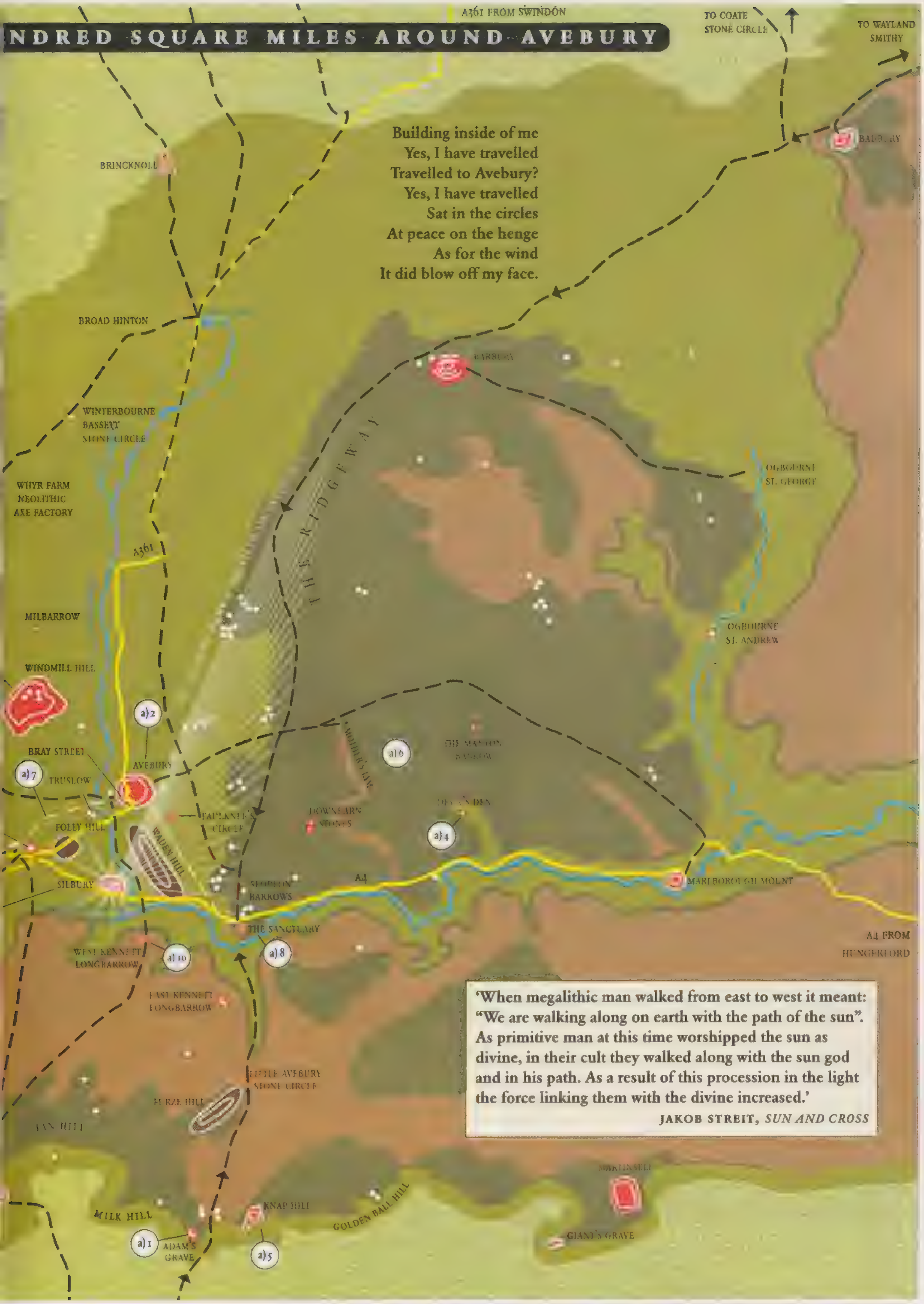


THE MARLBOROUGH DOWNS – ONE H

> 'This old monument does as much exceed in bignes the so renowned Stoneheng, as a Cathedral doeth a parish church.'
>
> JOHN AUBREY ON AVEBURY, *MONUMENTA BRITANNICA*

FOREST OF BRAYDON
● EXISTING ANCIENT MONUMENT
● DESTROYED ANCIENT MONUMENT
+ CHRISTIANISED ANCIENT MONUMENT
BARROW OF BRONZE AGE CHIEFTAIN
- - → PROBABLE NEOLITHIC TRACKWAY
DESTROYED STONE AVENUE
☐ LOWLANDS
▨ THE DOWNS
▨ THE HIGHER DOWNS
▨ THE HIGHEST DOWNS
THE MODERN A-ROADS
〰 WATERWAYS
IRON/BRONZE AGE CAMP ON POSSIBLE NEOLITHIC HILL
SIGNIFICANT SACRED HILLS
A4 FROM CALNE
A4
A4
YATESBURY MOUND
HAILSTONE FIELDS
BARROW WAY
a) 11
BECKHAMPTO LONGBARRO
OLDBURY
a) 3
a) 9
THREE BARROWS DOWN
MORGAN'S HILL
KING'S PLAY LONGBARROW
A361
HORTON DOWN LONGBARROW
OLIVER'S CAMP
MOTHER ANTHONY'S WELL
KITCHEN BARROW
RYBUR
VALE OF PEWSEY
A361 FROM DEVIZES

NDRED SQUARE MILES AROUND AVEBURY


A361 FROM SWINDON
TO COATE STONE CIRCLE
TO WAYLAND SMITHY
BADBURY
BRINCKNOLL
BROAD HINTON
BARBURY
WINTERBOURNE BASSETT STONE CIRCLE
WHYR FARM NEOLITHIC AXE FACTORY
OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE
THE RIDGEWAY
A361
MILBARROW
OGBOURNE ST. ANDREW
WINDMILL HILL
a) 2
BRAY STREET
a) 7
TRUSLOW
AVEBURY
a) 6
MOTHER'S LAM
THE MANTON BARROW
FOLLY HILL
FAULKNER'S CIRCLE
WADEN HILL
DOWNBARN STONES
DEVIL'S DEN
a) 4
SILBURY
SEVEN BARROWS
A4
MARLBOROUGH MOUNT
THE SANCTUARY
a) 8
WEST KENNETT LONGBARROW
a) 10
A4 FROM HUNGERFORD
EAST KENNETT LONGBARROW
LITTLE AVEBURY STONE CIRCLE
FURZE HILL
TAN HILL
MARTINSELL
KNAP HILL
GOLDEN BALL HILL
MILK HILL
a) 1
ADAM'S GRAVE
a) 5
GIANT'S GRAVE

Building inside of me
Yes, I have travelled
Travelled to Avebury?
Yes, I have travelled
Sat in the circles
At peace on the henge
As for the wind
It did blow off my face.

> 'When megalithic man walked from east to west it meant: "We are walking along on earth with the path of the sun". As primitive man at this time worshipped the sun as divine, in their cult they walked along with the sun god and in his path. As a result of this procession in the light the force linking them with the divine increased.'
>
> JAKOB STREIT, *SUN AND CROSS*

Adam's Grave

Formerly known as Wodnesbeorge, or Wodensbury, this dramatically-sited longbarrow is the highest in Wiltshire. Here, where the Ridgeway climbs up onto the Downs, Adam's Grave looks out over Salisbury Plain, and glimpses forever. The longbarrow was about 200 feet long by 100 wide, digging the side ditches deep and giving the brow of the hill a majestic sweep. The kerb of 'foreign' oolitic limestone or Forest marble drystone walling is now hidden, as are the chambers. This special stone was also used in the building of chambers at West Kennett,[G] the Kitchen Barrow to the west of the Downs, Shepherd's Shore and at Easton Down. Adam's Grave was excavated in 1860 by James Thurnam, the Medical Superintendent of the Wiltshire County Asylum in Devizes, who discovered several skeletons whose skulls had been split open and delicately-made leaf-shaped flint arrowheads with their tips broken off. There is an antiquarian White Horse behind Walker's Hill. It was carved out of the chalk in 1812 by farmer Robert Pile, who was forced to finish it himself, after the artist whom he had commissioned departed as soon as the money had been paid in full.

NOTES FROM ADAM'S GRAVE CHAMBERED LONGBARROW, OVERLOOKING THE VALE OF PEWSEY, WILTSHIRE: 26TH AUGUST 1991 CE

I'm sitting on Adam's Grave high up above this whole extraordinary prehistoric landscape. Far below, there are crop circles and ploughed crop circles, tumuli and barrows and ruined tombs. The sun is low to my back and I am alive with a feeling of grand ancientness. Yesterday, from Knap Hill,[G] this place loomed large and overpowering – how strange, for it does truly dwarf Knap Hill. This longbarrow is almost unphotographable – from each side it slopes away too dramatically to get both sides into view. It … would be impressive were it in any area, but to place it above everything else gives the grave an ark-like quality. Adam's Grave is stranded – forever to survey the Downs, watch the comings and goings of the crop circles, and help modern Man to beat his dreaded enemy, time. Up here, a man can inch just a little closer to the idea of forever.

Take the road from Lockeridge to Alton Barnes and Alton Priors. Adam's Grave is the cone-shaped breast directly ahead, just before the uplands fall away spectacularly to descend into Alton Barnes.

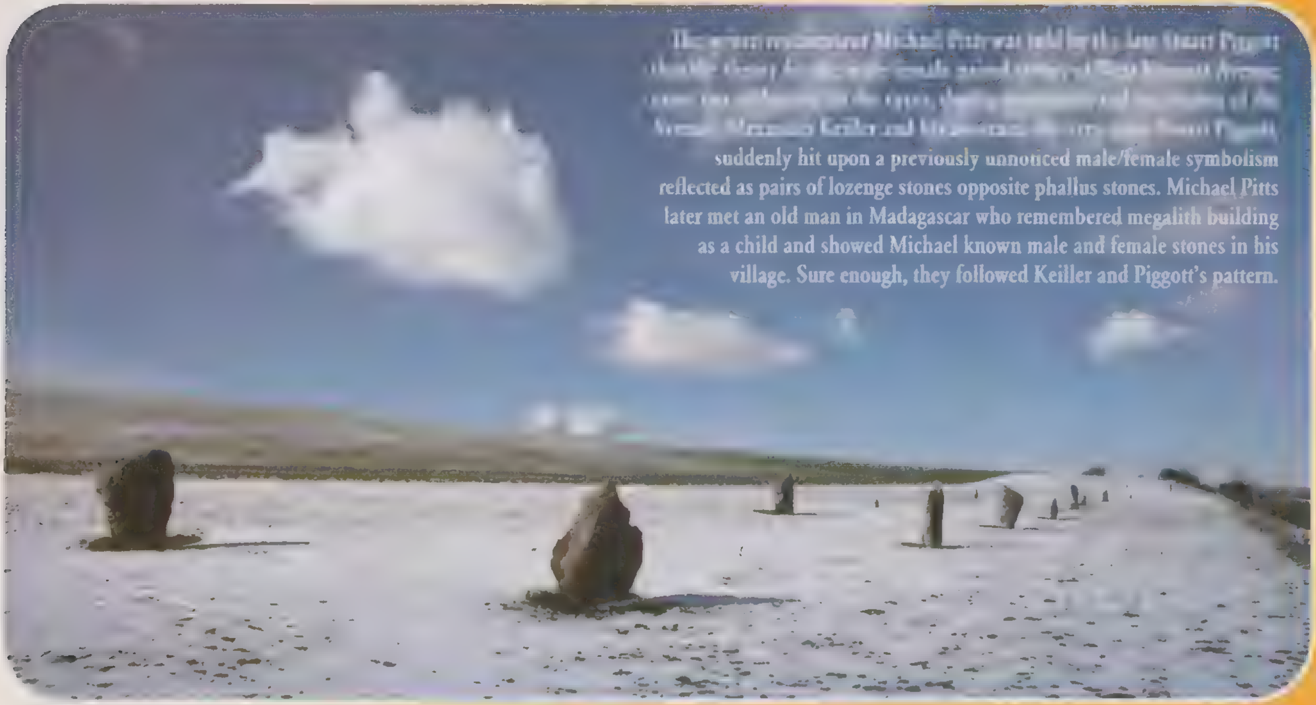
ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.102699

2 a) 2

Avebury

> **'...the monuments were created as a coherent ensemble to stage a religious drama which took one year to perform, with each edifice offering in turn a special setting for the celebation of a particular event in the farming year, matched to the corresponding event in the human life cycle.'**
>
> **MICHAEL DAMES, *THE AVEBURY CYCLE***

There can be no standard gazetteer entry for Avebury as this entire book is centred on this Neolithic temple. Therefore I here offer you further information on Avebury from the west and Cherhill Down.^{G} From the crossroads at the Broad Hinton White Horse, the Chair Hill appears as a Landscape Goddess strung out and skinny. From the enclosure at Yatesbury, she does the same. As the western point of the main perambulations were starting their ritual walk from that Quemerford direction, this troop of people would have activated the Ridgeway to Knoll Down even without that many people. Cherhill would have been an awe-inspiring beacon for those travelling from the north. Also, from the south aspect of the Ridgeway, those travelling from the south would see the Cherhill perambulation by looking over Furze Hill. From the northern arrival, the western aspect is all that the traveller sees. Windmill Hill is important, but is mainly overshadowed by the Cherhill massif and the people who would be irrigating its ridges with their walking. It seems that their motive was the creation of a sacred processional road starting in the open-handed great Chair Hill or Cherhill. By noting the dogged determination with which the road builders stuck to 'the crest of the hill', A. C. Smith clues us in to the psychological aspect of the road: by staying on the ridge every aspect of the Downs north and south could be seen. By taking the path of greatest resistence in building the pathway along the 'hog's back', the builders give away their intentions, which were in this case psychological and ritualistic.



[illegible] Michael Pitts was told by the late Stuart Piggott [illegible] Keiller and [illegible] suddenly hit upon a previously unnoticed male/female symbolism reflected as pairs of lozenge stones opposite phallus stones. Michael Pitts later met an old man in Madagascar who remembered megalith building as a child and showed Michael known male and female stones in his village. Sure enough, they followed Keiller and Piggott's pattern.

THE MOTHER IN THE AVEBURY LANDSCAPE – SOME NOTES FROM AVEBURY: 22ND JANUARY 1994 CE

I walked today on the pathway between Avebury and Yatesbury. Beside the ploughed remains of the two Neolithic mounds on the sacred path from Yatesbury south, I saw that Neolithic man could see this area only as the centre of everything, the omphalos of the whole culture. The Mother in the Avebury landscape is in every moment in every pore and in every face evident for all to see. The hills rise up from the flat western plain south of Pewsey, rise up all around Devizes, Heddington, Cherhill, all the way to Clyffe Pypard. The female form rears up all over, presenting Man with not only the most overtly female-looking massif of chalk downland, but also [one] pregnant with the beautiful and exquisite children that literally lie around this landscape – this is the flint. Flints in chalk ... the landscape yields these Goddess figurines up to ... the very centre of everything in this land...

Avebury is on the A361 from Wroughton to Devizes.

2 a) 3

ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.05.69

Cherhill Down

Standing on the westernmost edge of the Marlborough Downs, the most visible earthworks upon Cherhill Down were probably superimposed upon this great natural monument more than two millennia after the hill's greatest period of importance. Cherhill was most likely then known as Kouer Hill, as suggested from the old spellings of Ciriel in 1155, Ceriel in 1158 and Cyriel in 1235, and it was from here in the great vale that visitors from the west met for their final perambulations into Avebury.G After travelling west from Derry Hill, 'the place of the oaks', down through Quemerford – 'the crossing at the confluence of the streams' – the two great earthen longbarrows of Cherhill and Calne Without psychologically prepared the travellers from the west for their arrival at the sacred territory. They would then have climbed on to the barrow-lined Ridgeway which follows the east–west hogsback along Cherhill Down, for this appears to be the final part of the journey, meeting the longstones of the Beckhampton Avenue beyond Knoll Down. The Iron Age earthworks of Oldbury enclose the hilltop of Cherhill with fine defences and deep ditches. But the most treacherous slope, which is on the north side, had a large chalk horse carved into its side in 1780 by Dr Christopher Alsop, who explained his plans to the turf-cutters on the hillside by screaming through a megaphone. The 19th-century obelisk gets uglier as the traveller gets closer to it, composed as it is of grotesquely huge bricks. Yet its visibility for fifteen miles or more brings a sense of anchor and stability to the constantly disorientated 20th-century traveller, and the obelisk is a famous and well-loved landmark, despite its unsuitable and unsympathetic position.

NOTES AFTER A SHOW, MERCURE HOTEL, DEN HAAG: SATURDAY 14TH SEPT. 1996 CE

On Thursday, I walked down Yatesbury Lane up to Oldbury Castle… On top of the earthwork above the white horse to the right about thirty yards, I lay amongst the sheep and discerned an incredible buzzing below me, as though I had huddled up to the Great Mother's heartbeat and was riding through space atop her great breasts. I realised that cattle and sheep are plugged into this great grid and follow lines, as do the deer. Erik Berry's news about the possible cursus in Kilmartin ValleyG following the lines of the deerpaths would indicate a clear link. But on Thursday I was plugged into the Mother's Tit.

Cherhill Down is on the A4 between Calne and Silbury.

Devil's Den

Situated on a slight rise in the middle of Clatford Bottom, the Devil's Den is the only true dolmen in the area, and was formerly a chambered barrow, as the great stones at the eastern edge of the field testify. As recently as William Stukeley's time, these stones, now reduced to field-clearance, were part of the environs of the monument. His illustration also shows the dolmen on far more of a rise, which 250 years of modern farming have altered considerably. The stones for the Devil's Den were all local sarsen, probably from those stones lying strewn across this valley floor. The fabulous capstone is three feet thick and around ten feet square. Some claim that the longbarrow was 230 feet long and 130 feet wide, streaming out north up the valley parallel with the path. Others consider the low-lying position of the Devil's Den to be proof that it was not a longbarrow, since it did not hug the skyline. This argument is very weak – the longbarrows at South Street, Beckhampton and Milbarrow were large structures, none of which hugged the skyline. Legends of the Devil's work at the dolmen are found in A. G. Bradley's *Round about Wiltshire* (1906), in which he writes:

'… uncanny spectacles may be witnessed in the neighbourhood of this huge and solitary cromlech, the worst of all, perhaps, being when the devil himself arrives with eight white oxen at midnight and makes futile efforts to pull it down, while a white rabbit with lurid coals for eyes sits on the top stone as the presiding genius of the scene. Again it used to be an article of faith that if water was poured at night into any of the hollows of the roof-stone, it would always be found drained to the last drop in the morning by some demon.'

NOTES FROM THE DEVIL'S DEN, FYFIELD, WILTSHIRE: MONDAY 27TH MAY 1991 CE

Arriving in bright sunlight this glorious morning, the track through the valley brings us out onto the lean lush hillside that places the Devil's Den lonely and humorous in the middle of many hundreds of sheep. This is my fourth trip here but Dorian's first; she likes it best of all the cromlechs so far, mainly for its situation, its sheep and its precariousness. The capstone is supported by only two dubious and rickety uprights, which appear to be perilously close to falling at any minute. It looks like an ancient sprinter about to shoot off the blocks for the 100 megalithic yard dash.

I am now sitting on the pile of sarsens forty-one paces from the Devil's Den – there are nine large stones and various smaller ones, all left here over the years as farming encroached upon the former longbarrow. All over this valley are sprinklings of sarsen brought down from the last Ice Age: glacial erratics which gave Neolithic and Bronze Age Man so much of his building stone. But even in the 1720s, William Stukeley was drawing the Devil's Den with far more scatterings of stone that can now be seen. There is almost none of the former earthwork left, yet this solitariness which farming gives to the stones of the cromlech adds considerably to its charm. This is a magical place – a magnificent Pastureality on 360 degrees.

On the A4 between Fyfield and the Clatford Bottom turning, park at Clatford farm – directly in front of the sign so you don't get hit by tractors. Cross the A4 and walk north three quarters of a mile (signpost is incorrect) – the Devil's Den is in a field beside the trackway.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.121636

Knap Hill

Looking out high upon the southernmost point of the Marlborough Downs, Knap Hill was first settled around 4000 BCE. The single line of earthen banks are the best preserved in Wiltshire and serve to show what Windmill Hill^{G} would have looked like. The causeways through each earthen bank are around eighteen feet across and the entire enclosure is of around four acres. Excavations in one of the ditches in 1908/9 produced antler picks, a human jawbone, Neolithic shards from both hereabouts and also the Cotswolds area, sarsen stone chippings and flakes of flint. The ditch was proved to have been as deep as a man, originally over twelve feet wide and six feet deep. The settlement was in constant habitation from the Neolithic period right up through the Roman period and the Dark Ages to the coming of the Normans.

Atop Knap Hill

Atop Knap Hill I eat my snot
For 'tis the only food I've got
I stare and up at Adam's Grave
And there I see the lonesome wave
Of that lonely lookout... Is he
As covered in wingèd ants as me?

Atop Knap Hill I smile a lot
So thankful that this is my lot.

NOTES FROM KNAP HILL, THE PEWSEY DOWNS, WILTSHIRE: 25TH AUGUST 1991 CE

About six months ago, I saw a picture of Knap Hill in a '60s *Collins Field Guide to Archaeology*. My stomach turned over and I saw a friend and sense all at once – Knap Hill is a survivor where Windmill Hill is all ploughed away and only imaginable. But at Knap Hill, the causeways are intact and the single ring enclosure (inferior only to Windmill Hill, which is three ringed) is different from how it was in Neolithic times only in that it is now covered in grass instead of its original white chalk. Today, I climbed alone up Knap Hill, after coming upon it accidentally yesterday out looking for crop circles. It is so awesome that I symbolically entered through the causeway and walked all around the hill, surveying the incredible Vale of Pewsey with its many crop circles dotting the sand-coloured corn. This is the world of the Ancients. This place is everything. I feel my fingernails grow and a feral-jawedness coming over me as I write. I begin to understand the ancient mind that did not need to grow only upwards. Across the way is the majestic and magnificent Adam's Grave,^{G} the most marvellously placed grave of any man I ever knew. It surely was the grave of Adam – no one else deserves such a burial place.

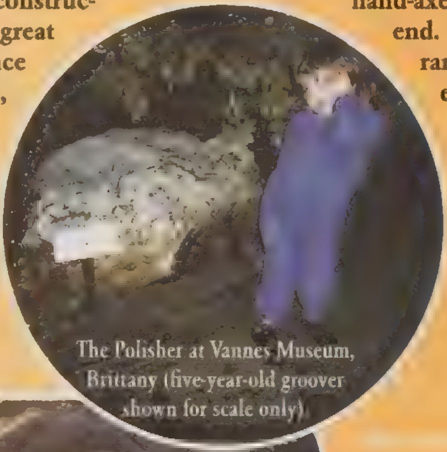
Take the road from Lockeridge to Alton Barnes and Alton Priors. Knap Hill is the sculptured ringed hill on the left, just before the uplands fall away spectacularly to descend into Alton Barnes.

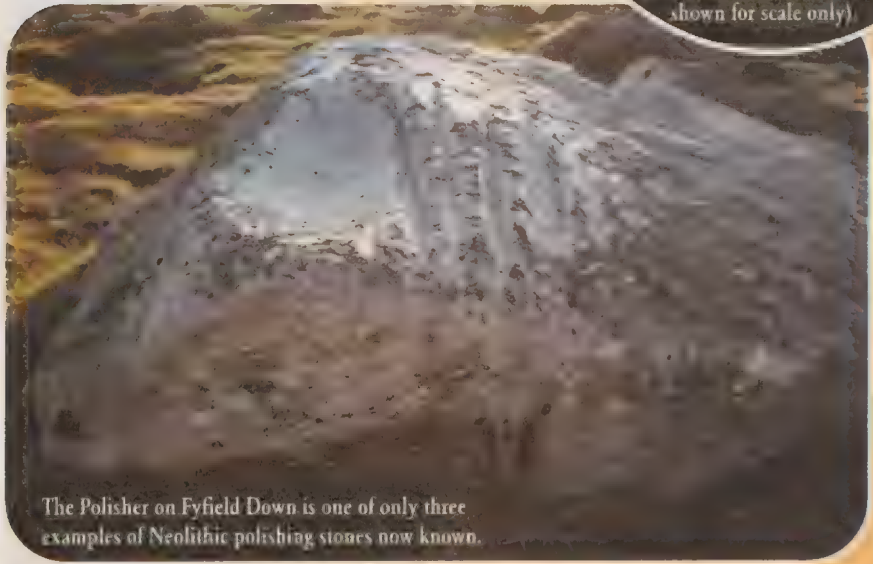
ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.134706

The Mother's Jam

On Fyfield Down is the Mother's Jam, a natural temple of scattered sarsen stones addressing one huge altar stone set within the cleft of a slight hillside. It is unlikely that this large stone was moved to its fortuitous position, but its uncanny natural symmetry qualifies it as a temple. The sarsen stones which enrich the Marlborough Downs lie in a raggedy north–south line from New Totterdown to Lockeridge Dene. Legend has it that before the professional stonecutters came, it was possible to walk from one end of the flow to the other without touching the ground. These stones are made of siliceous sandstone and are famously durable. For example, they are known to be two-and-a-half times tougher than the hard granite used in the construction of the Aberdeenshire stone circles. These great sarsens have been used for temple building since the first temples of the Neolithic were erected, but the stones also acted as a natural temple in those long days before agriculture and the subsequent separation from the Mother Earth. The road which passes the Mother's Jam continues west past the site of the Manton Barrow, though this magnificent statement of Bronze Age wealth and power was destroyed by the landowners as late as 1952. But between the Mother's Jam and the Manton Barrow stands Long Tom, an eight-and-a-half foot standing stone and possibly an Iron Age way marker. Such is the magic of the Marlborough Downs that an eight-foot standing stone can pass vitually unregistered in the ancient landscape. Long Tom is found at O.S. 173.144713.

The Polisher is a Neolithic polishing stone, estimated to have been in use for 1,200 years in order for its grooves to have been so deep. It polished and repolished stone tools on the side of the hill north of Delling Copse, and is now worn to a fantastic sheen – imagine an unworked sarsen with several areas as smooth as a ceremonial hand-axe, and a concave bowl at one end. These stones are extremely rare – only one other inferior example is left on the British mainland. There is a block half the size in front of Vannes Museum, in Brittany, made of dazzling white quartz. But the general weight of the grooves are not nearly so deep as those of the Polisher.


The Polisher at Vannes Museum, Brittany (five-year-old groover shown for scale only)


The Polisher on Fyfield Down is one of only three examples of Neolithic polishing stones now known.

DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT AMPHITHEATRE, NOTES AT DUSK ON FYFIELD DOWN IN WILTSHIRE: 12TH JUNE 1992 CE

The Greyweathers[G] are scattered at the feet of the altar stone across this valley bottom and … the sky is blissful under [the] blue moon to my left and the sun's dreaming rays to my right. This was a mesolithic temple of Mother Earth, and I shall now draw the scene as it better illustrates my point… This is a grand revelation and all of today has been a sensation…

Leave Avebury at its eastern entrance and walk until you have crossed the Ridgeway. Here the path will become less defined as sarsen stones litter the uplands. Pass through the white intrusive Gallops and descend the path to a sea of stones.

The Longstone Cove

The two great stones known as Adam and Eve are rooted in Longstones Field between Folly Hill and the Beckhampton drove. In his *Monumenta Britannica*, John Aubrey referred to them as 'three huge upright stones ... called the Devill's Coytes'. The ancientness of the north–south roads around them is proven by extending the line of the roads towards the stones – they would have crossed precisely at Adam and Eve. It is thought that Eve, the smaller of the two stones, stood on the now-destroyed Beckhampton Avenue, visible in William Stukeley's time, but now only implied in the route of the green track west towards West Down via the Beckhampton longbarrow. The Adam stone was part of a Cove, so named by William Stukeley, who saw the monument in superior condition in the early 1700s. It fell in 1911, enabling archaeologists Maud and Benjamin Cunnington to excavate around it. They discovered a Beaker burial of a middle-aged man, but had extraordinary difficulty re-erecting the thirty-ton stone, taking four weeks over the job. First, they borrowed three enormous jacks from the Great Western railway, their plan being to raise the stone upright then pull it into place using traction engines. But the plan failed, and they were reduced to inching the stone up day-by-day, supporting the stone a little more each time with timbers and wedges – a very disheartening and sobering experience for proud new 20th-century industrialised Man. A third stone survived here until the early 18th-century, at which time Richard Fowler, one of the great scourges of Avebury,^{G} broke it up for building material.

LAST NOTES AT 9 A.M. AT THE LONGSTONE COVE, FOLLY HILL, BECKHAMPTON: 16TH SEPTEMBER 1997 CE

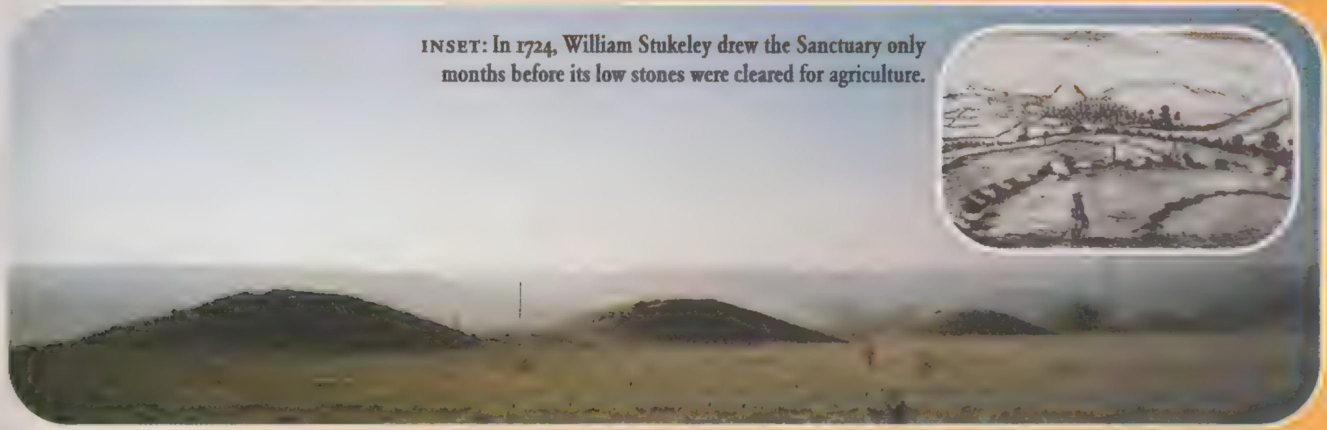
As the last essay of this book crawled to its conclusion last night, I watched a lunar eclipse hang dramatically over the Ridgeway… Being indoors these long months, I rushed here for a celebration at this panorama of infinite meanings. Standing at Adam, the subtle genius of Windmill Hill^{G} rises so gently to the north, whilst Folly Hill to the south is the great lost sacred eminence of this landscape. I shall not ramble on, for I am here to celebrate a moment, not to manufacture it.

At Beckhampton roundabout, take the A361 to Avebury and Swindon. After 200 yards, turn immediately left at '60s farm cottages and take the road straight on. Adam & Eve are in the field ahead.

The Sanctuary, Seorfon Barrows & the Ridgeway

The Sanctuary was a many-phase monument which began in the early Neolithic as a dense series of timber-posts. It changed its shape constantly until the Bronze Age, when a double concentric ring of low dense stones was erected. After its tragic destruction in 1724, the position of the Sanctuary was actually lost for the whole of the 19th century, until its rediscovery by Maud Cunnington in 1930. It was at the Sanctuary that Neolithic pilgrims would end their long Ridgeway journeys. The Ridgeway is at its finest here, as though its reason for existence pours out north and south from the fountainhead source at the Sanctuary. Travelling from the south, the processional last miles revealed Silbury^G at the heart of the landscape, with a breathtaking Avebury^G analogue at the neck of Furze, or Ver's, Hill. Travelling down the Ridgeway from the north, Silbury was only revealed at the last moment, only seconds before the arrival at the Sanctuary. All northern pilgrims would have watched Silbury's white chalk top moving across the obtusely angled Waden Hill horizon as they passed their final four-and-a-half miles south down the Ridgeway. But not until the Sanctuary was Silbury's impossibly great size revealed.

The Seorfon Barrows stand on the Hill O'Ver, crowning the horizon for all travellers from the east. The barrows were built in the early Bronze Age in as prized a place as any on the Downs. The bodies of men, women and children were found in these important burial mounds, three of which have a bank and ditch, denoting a special significance. Archaeologists say that only one in twelve Wessex barrows has such a bank and ditch. In the 17th century, John Aubrey knew this place as Seven-Barrow Hill, and these barrows were mentioned along with the Sanctuary as long ago as the Charter of Athelstan in 939 CE. In her *Folklore of Ancient Wiltshire*, Katherine Jordan writes: 'Although only seven are prominent, there are in fact around a dozen barrows here, so it seems likely that the number seven here is mystical rather than strictly descriptive.'



INSET: In 1724, William Stukeley drew the Sanctuary only months before its low stones were cleared for agriculture.

NOTES FROM THE SANCTUARY, AVEBURY, WILTSHIRE: NOON, 25TH AUGUST 1991 CE

The Sanctuary is a wild place and not one for those without imagination. Since William Stukeley experienced the harrowing destruction of the stone circle here in the 1720s, the Sanctuary has gone from myth to enigma. Maud Cunnington rediscovered it at the turn of the century, though scorned by contemporaries, who still poo-pooed Stukeley as a romantic who had foisted the Druid onto the British consciousness. Now it is no longer a visible site... But the position of the Sanctuary is everything. Here on Overton Hill, I am looking at the route taken by the one-and-a-half mile West Kennett Avenue. In front of me is Silbury and way behind on the distant horizon are the Iron Age earthworks of Oldbury Castle and the Cherhill Horse. Far to my right at ninety degrees are the Ridgeway and many Bronze Age barrows (from around 1500 BCE). Directly between the Ridgeway and Silbury, I can make out the remaining megaliths of the West Kennett Avenue and, far beyond and just discernible, the two Bronze Age barrows of Windmill Hill.^{G} To the left of Silbury at about 600 yards is the enormous megalithic frontage of West Kennett Longbarrow^G whilst the eerie and enigmatic East Kennett Longbarrow lies almost at ninety degrees to me marooned in its field, tree covered since all antiquity. The sense of place here is quite wonderful – we are only feet from the busy A4 but time spent here gives purpose and sense to the whole Avebury complex and its neighbourhood.

Overton Hill Barrows are visible and spectacular on the horizon on the A4 from Fyfield and Marlborough. The Sanctuary stands/cowers beside the A4.

2 a) 9

ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.100685

Silbury

Silbury is the greatest hill altar in all of the prehistoric world. This huge Mother hill stands as magnificent and perplexing as when she was first built 5,000 years ago. Seen from afar or grazing the near horizon, appearing out of nowhere to shock the disinterested motorist, there is no archetype more descriptive of British prehistory than the flat-topped sacred hill of Silbury. One-hundred-and-thirty feet tall, the greatest Neolithic mound in Europe stands on the valley floor next to the rising river Kennet in its own much-ploughed earthwork moat. Of all the Ancients' building, digging, raising and levelling, their most permanent work is surely this great mound. For in Silbury, we see here on the Marlborough Downs the most fantastic end-product. There were never any improvements made upon Silbury, for its construction and situation were impeccable. This gigantic mound, the largest Neolithic hill altar in Europe, was so superbly created that excavations of every kind in the past centuries have failed to render the expected death blow, though its siblings, contemporaries and rivals have been ruined by such volcano-like explorations, ending in the total destruction of some monuments.

But Silbury was no casual enterprise. For years before the mound's construction, its position was considered over and over by the builders, in order to make the most powerful psychological impact. This project involved huge labour teams and a culture with plenty of spare time. As Edward King wrote in his *Munimenta Antiqua* of 1799, Silbury was a work 'which could never be raised … except in time of peace, and with the aid of a vast multitude'. Silbury was built in stages from huge blocks of lower chalk, which were used to create an extraordinary step-pyramid, making a platform of great stability. It was then filled in with chalk rubble to create an enormous white pyramidal hill. The presence of Silbury created a cult of artificial hill altars in this area and others during the Neolithic period.

No-one knows how long it took or in what stages Silbury was raised. Sir Jonas Moore, Surveyor of the King's Ordinance, told John Aubrey that the 17th-century price would have been £80,000. But the catering and temporary accommodation would have been the most major concern of such a project as the building of Silbury at any time in history or prehistory. The soil management involved in creating such a mound was not the easy work of hopefuls out to make an extra big round-barrow, but a dedicated and sustained piece of vision, achieved by highly skilled workers. As an example of the sheer timelessness of Silbury, there is no better example than the words of the shepherd who spoke of Silbury to the writer A. G. Bradley in 1906: 'I don't take much notice of her myself, but I've heerd my feyther tell as they druv a hole into her innards onc't, an' vound zummat or awther.'

Silbury is beside the A4 between Marlborough and Beckhampton .

ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.(WEST)104677/(EAST)116668

2 a) 10

West Kennett & East Kennett Longbarrows

West Kennett Longbarrow stands in a superb elevated position overlooking Silbury,[G] the Sanctuary[G] and Waden Hill, and is the most potent of chambered monuments in all of Britain. The huge West Kennett long mound is over 100 yards long and formerly had side ditches which were six feet deep and flattened. The astronomer John North has described the West Kennett Longbarrow chambers as star-chambers, built to observe the movements of the planets and the stars. The core of this mound was a great cairn of large sarsen boulders rising over six feet high, and a large peristalith wall or kerb defined the edge of the mound and prevented slippage. Specially chosen oolitic limestone was used throughout the longbarrow chambers, imported from the Frome area, twenty-five miles away. The chambers of Adam's Grave,[G] the Kitchen Barrow and others in the Avebury[G] area all utilised this Forest marble in their construction, and Aubrey Burl has suggested that this was to symbolise the Severn–Cotswold origins of these monuments. It is said that the longbarrow was built around 3500 BCE, and continued in use for 1,300 years until around 2200 BCE, when its chambers were filled with debris and its great forecourt was dismantled and laid vertically against the entranceway. Stuart Piggott excavated in 1956, at which time the great stones were re-erected and the chambers entirely cleared of finds. Forty-six more skeletons in varying stages of disarticulation and destruction were discovered in the five great chambers. Skulls and longbones had been deliberately removed, whilst other bones and remains had been smashed against the chambers as though in shamanic frenzy. Pottery, beads, bone and stone tools, and flints were also found, along with over 1,000 years' Neolithic domestic garbage.

West Kennett legend has it that, on Midsummer's Day, a ghostly priest with a white spectral hound with red ears visits the stones at sunrise.

The giant of East Kennett stands upon its exposed spur overlooking the Ridgeway, with a marvellous view of Silbury at the north-west. This is the longest longbarrow in Britain and the most enigmatic and unexplored of them all. Five yards longer and wider than the West Kennett Longbarrow, as well as being around five feet taller, East Kennett appears far greater in size than its neighbour, mainly because its ridged back still stands proud and unbowed. It is said that in World War II, a German Heinkel III bomber returning from an aborted blitz upon Bristol attempted to disgorge its load over Yatesbury RAF station, but hit East Kennett longbarrow by mistake, creating an instant excavation quicker and more deadly even than the methods of some Victorian archaeologists. Forty-odd years ago, an aerial photograph showed traces of a possible cursus running north-east to south-west past the west end of the barrow.

NOTES FROM WEST KENNETT LONGBARROW: 27TH AUGUST 1991 CE, 11 A.M.

I'm sitting in the cool and peace of the second left-hand chamber, the sunlight blasting in through the front entrance and the two skylights which Stuart Piggott put into the roof in 1955. The chambers of West Kennett Longbarrow are enormous – I'm six feet, two inches and have no need even to stoop except in the tiniest chambers… Yesterday, we walked up to the mysterious and wonderful East Kennett Longbarrow – an arduous trip that could only bring us up to within 400 yards of the barrow. Trees line the top of East Kennett and have aided its defence against indiscriminate excavators. From East Kennett, the outlines of both Silbury and West Kennett Longbarrow stood obvious and perplexing on the distant horizon. It is this incredible space and clever distribution of monuments which holds the Avebury area up as different from all the rest… Some people camp inside the West Kennett chambers – I cannot imagine anything so extreme. To confront the Ancients armed only with 'good intentions' and 'vibe' is to be far too casual with the gods…

Travellers along the A4 between Beckhampton and West Kennett pass directly between Silbury and West Kennett longbarrow. The longbarrow lay-by is the one to the east of Silbury. East Kennett longbarrow is the ship-like phantom a half-mile to the south-east.

2 a) 11

ORDNANCE SURVEY
173.08.71

Windmill Hill

'...the capital emporium of the whole axe trade of the country.'
Stone & Wallis, 1951

'...it could be held that a comparison with a modern turf is misleading since it may be that in neolithic times there was no "turf" as we understand it today; a site such as this may have been a clearing in woodland and under woodland. *There would be a turf structure* [my italics].'
Isobel Smith, *Windmill Hill & Avebury*

'The extraordinary paucity of finds within the Avebury circles indicates that this temple was deliberately kept clean.'
Isobel Smith, *Windmill Hill & Avebury*

The central Neolithic hill at Avebury[G] is Windmill Hill. It is upon her summit that the massive three-ringed enclosure sat almost 6,000 years ago, and it is to Windmill Hill that we turn for the oldest Neolithic pottery. Questions still arise as to the fundamental uses of Windmill Hill. In his book *Causewayed Enclosures*, Roger Mercer mentions 'the total lack of any water supply on the hill'. We see cattle within a ritual enclosure for a limited amount of time, because there is no water; and all hands ready to deal with those cattle. This suggests far more that the causewayed enclosures began as some kind of cow temple. Michael Dames argues in *The Avebury Cycle* for that temple's main totem having been the cow. In her book documenting the Keiller excavations, *Windmill Hill & Avebury*, Isobel Smith writes:

> 'The abundance of pottery, grain-rubbers, and querns and of remains of slaughtered animals testify to the consumption of food on a large scale... The quantity and variety of meat represented by these deposits would seem to imply that they were the remains of communal feasts.'

These two aspects suggest large ritual meetings, for the site would have been cleared after the event. Isobel Smith writes of Windmill Hill: 'The great abundance of knapping by-products (cores and flakes) shows that it was brought mainly in nodule form and worked on the spot.' One flake of Palaeolithic origin was deposited on Windmill Hill and four of Mesolithic type also. Archaeologists suggest that these arrived along with the huge amounts of flakes taken from Knoll Down, Whyr farm and at the foot of Avebury Down (western escarpment of the Marlborough Downs). But Isobel Smith also mentions that some of the pieces could have been found 'on one of the sites producing hand axes at Winterbourne Bassett...'

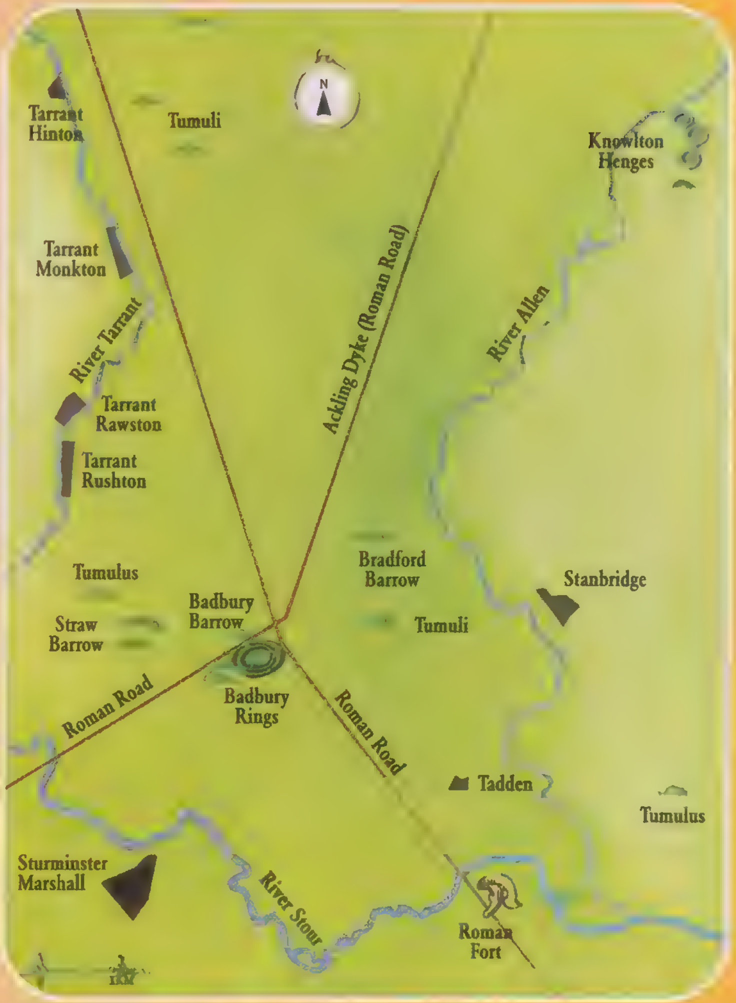
Isobel Smith suggests that Windmill Hill's significance caused the digging of the causewayed enclosure to be built as a sense of sacred demarcation. She writes that before the digging of the bank material 'a few pieces of imported rock and shards of pottery made in the Bath/Frome region show that the site was already being frequented by people coming from a distance *before the enclosure was built* [my italics] ... possibly the ditches and banks represent the formal demarcation of an area that had already acquired a special significance...' Miss Smith then continues: 'It is evident that the site still continued to attract visitors *even after the ditches were more or less completely filled in* [my italics].' Smith also suggests that 'special efforts were directed to the creation of imposing entrances, by widening and heightening the banks on either side'. Windmill Hill is ringed by trackways, longbarrows and significantly named sites. Isobel Smith adds that 'almost every one of the major axe producing workshops is represented within a 2-mile radius of Avebury. But there is remarkably little imported stone from Avebury itself, and the centre of attraction was Windmill Hill, whence come nearly half the specimens from the Avebury district.'

Windmill Hill is situated between Avebury, Winterbourne Monkton and Yatesbury. It is best approached by foot from Avebury, but is also accessible from Avebury Trusloe. Off the A361, pass through the village, bearing to the left until Windmill Hill appears ahead. Park sensibly and walk.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
195.964030

2 b) 1

Badbury Rings



This great hill of Badb, the Irish Neolithic Goddess, stands as three enormous earth rings surmounted by a summit with round barrows and 365 beech trees, a 19th-century good luck dedication for every day of the year. The monument is superbly placed, eighteen acres of sudden upland on the low flatlands at the confluence of the rivers Allen and Stour. The smaller river Tarrant at the north further isolates the land on which the earthwork sits. Badbury has four Roman roads aligned upon it, showing the vast importance of the site, including the horrendous Ackling Dyke, destroyer of the Dorset Cursus.[G] But the whole of Badbury remains unexcavated and its epic history is as yet unknown, except for John Aubrey's 17th-century discovery of a 'Roman sword' which was being 'used as a cheese-toster'. From its almost island position within the three rivers, it is most likely that the hill began as a sacred altar in remarkably flat land, subsequently taking on a defensive role similar to that of the causewayed enclosures when the age became more violent. There are few sites in Britain dedicated to Badb, and even the magnificent Badbury Castle on the North Wiltshire Downs at 174.208797 has been meaninglessly renamed by archaeologists in recent years. Opposite the legendary Caer Caradoc in Shropshire stands Bodbury Ring at 137.445948. These two sacred hills are bisected by a Roman road, suggesting that their prehistoric importance was vital.

That four Roman roads converged on Iron Age Badbury suggests that the Battle Goddess had maintained her importance until that time. The highly important Badbury Barrow formerly stood to the west about a mile away, at 195.948035, close to Straw Barrow. In 1845, excavators removed a large block of sandstone from its centre carved with daggers and axes like those on Stonehenge.[G] Also discovered was a ring of flints and a wall of large sandstone blocks.

BADBURY RINGS SURROUNDED – NOTES IN THE EVENING IN CLEAR BLUE SKIES, DORSET: 30TH MAY 1996 CE

No wonder the Romans sited four major roads on this place. Badbury is the hill, the only vantage point in a massive outstretching which all appears to ooze away from Badbury. The place draws the traveller in there – it is on the skyline, round a bend and we've lost it again. Ah, there it is, whoa, such a big focal point and only 295 feet high. Still, in the valley of flatness, the man on the stool is king. Like Silbury,[G] Badbury seems to have been of such power that the Romans needed to rein it in. Imagine this hill before paranoia encircled it. As gentle a maiden you could not wish to see anywhere. Now, Badbury lies coiled like some great earth octopus ready to uncoil and grab the visitor. The trees on the summit are far apart and it has none of the claustrophobia that so many aerial shots suggest. Tumuli along the Roman road, which is now the NT entrance, may be Roman but may also suggest that part of the road was a prehistoric trackway leading from the river, though more convincing would be the Sturminster Marshall road, with its bridge over the river Stour. Badbury Rings quite a revelation – and just imagine the bliss on this hill before the Bronze Age came down!

Badbury Rings are signposted on the B3082, between Blandford Forum and Wimborne Minster. On most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
SEE BELOW

Bridport, Abbotsbury & the Swannery

BRIDPORT WEST BAY
10k & FUN RUN

The purpose of this Bridport tour is to reveal the beauty of the landscape and its correlations with placenames and legend. For here at the beginning of the mythical Chesil Beach moving north-west was the land of Bridgit or Bride. At Abbotsbury, close to the mouths of the rivers Bride and Brit, hundreds of swans arrive every year and the site has been managed since the 13th century when records first began. Legend has it that many of the swans are princes and princesses returned to an earthly guise for some last act. North-east of the swannery is the Bridgit village of Littlebredy, whilst to the north stands the magical Long Bredy, a place so built into the womb of the Mother that the air seems moist with fertility. Away to the west on the river Brit stands the town of Bridport, surrounded by a wild landscape of conical hills and a verdant wide-open river mouth. To walk through Bridport is to do a double-take. For this town has certain views which are unlike any other town and the raggedy shape of Bridport only increases the feeling of a new settlement built in a very sacred valley. Colmer's Hill rears up at all points to confuse the disorientated driver and delight the grounded walker. This hill is at 193.440937 and stands like an archetypal Bridgit image – like the pregnant Sinéad O'Connor – two trees surmounting the conical summit, like a cartoon haircut. Arriving in Bridport from Eggardun[G] really emphasises the way in which Bridgit landscapes manifest as landscape analogues of the young Mother. The great bank of Chesil Beach was probably the first natural cursus, inspiring the Neolithic builders with its great bank so safely excluding the sea from this quiet backwater. Chapel Hill overlooks Abbotsbury Swannery, its strange ringed outline becoming most defined in the evening when looking from the east-north-east. At this time, shadows on the rings give the hill an especially eerie aura, whilst the position of St. Catherine's chapel appears to lead north-west down the slope to Fuller's Way. Perhaps a former Pagan site existed before the chapel, for the intimations of connections to Fuller's Way immediately link Chapel Hill with Chesil Beach – two very natural temples. In that safe backwater, Abbotsbury Swannery holds a magical and regal position. The hills surrounding its lands are all large but not overpowering. Merry Hill to the east is a wonderful green eminence, whilst the Chapel Hill rings glisten in the shadows at the north-west. At the south-east, where the channel of water squeezes past Chesil Beach, there is low Chesters Hill coming down to the water like some Orkney landscape. The swannery is packed with fertile water plants along with teeming swan families, many of whom build their nests and hatch their cygnets actually on the causeway.

NOTES IN BRIDPORT MAIN STREET, ON THE RIVER BRIT, DORSET: 1ST JUNE 1996 CE

Today, everything has meaning. Walking along this bustling thoroughfare, I forget that I am in a magical land until, looking up casually, the magic of Colmer's Hill blasts me to the moooon! What is it about Bridport which makes every building look as though it were some hastily erected film set in the centre of a sacred river valley? The hills all around the town squeeze tightly together to make the lanes extra-narrow, so that when the traveller arrives in Bridport it gives them the false impression that this is really a big town. But, then, anything would appear New York-size after the back roads of West Milton!

These places are all signposted. The swannery is in Abbotsbury itself.

ABBOTSBURY: 194.556866
ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY: 194.576840
BRIDPORT: 193.46.93.
CHAPEL HILL: 194.573848
COLMER'S HILL: 193.440936

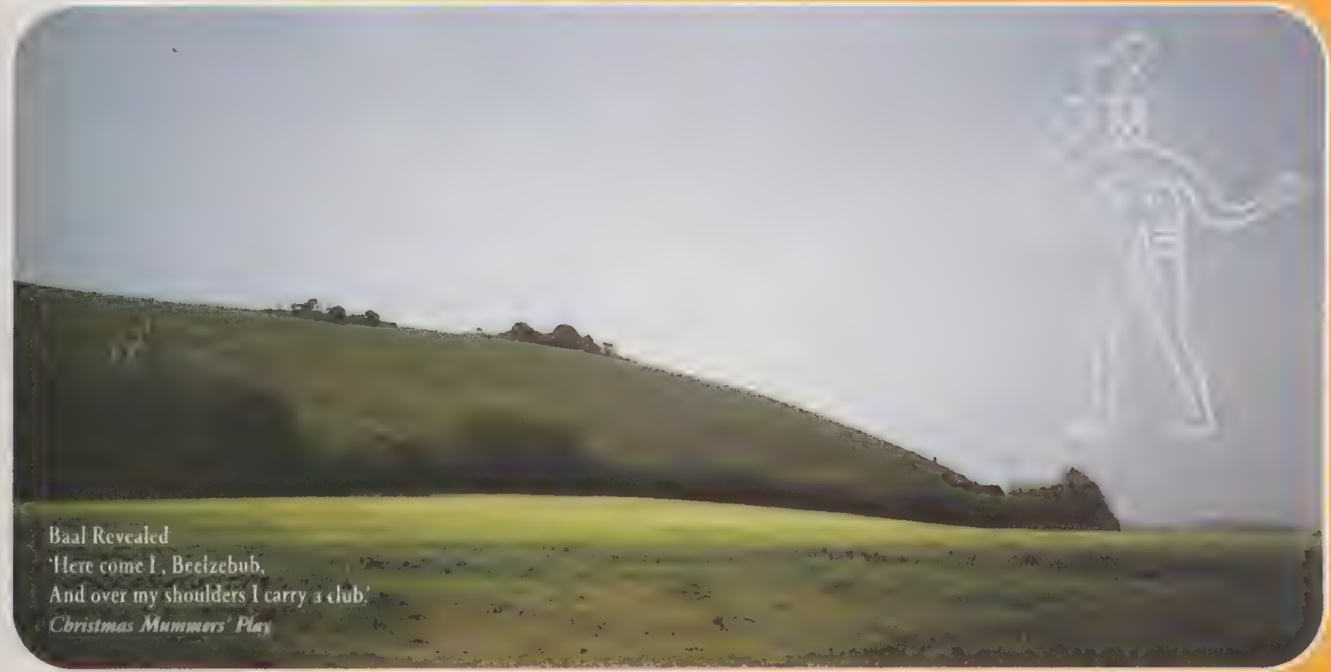
ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.667016

2 b) 3

Cerne Abbas Giant

The Cerne Abbas Giant is an enormous 180 feet tall chalk-white hill figure, his right arm threatening with a club, his thirty-foot penis priapic and hung with two large balls. Giant Hill is at the end of a three mile long ridge, a large thrusting limb of land cutting into Yelcombe Bottom, the gentle enclosed valley floor which floats like a natural gathering point. At the top of Giant Hill is the Frying Pan, a small rectangular earthwork of unknown provenance. The Giant, meanwhile, courses all the way down the tip of Giant Hill to greet the travellers of the Cerne Valley and the prehistoric locals, from those at Higher City to the west to the Neolithic longbarrow at Smacam Down to the south-west. Arguments have been raised as to the giant's genuine antiquity, since he was only recently recorded. But this seems far more likely to have been caused by prudery and sheer lack of belief by any who had not seen with their own eyes. This was for many centuries, I believe, a local wonder. Discussing a chalk giant with a thirty-foot erection was not considered good after-dinner conversation, however true it may have been.

Dating the Cerne Giant is difficult and quite unnecessary. He was obviously used as a place of ritual for many hundreds of years and probably changed in detail from time to time. At the Society of Antiquaries, William Stukeley attributed the giant's club to Hercules for the first time in 1764. Scholars have generally agreed that the giant is a depiction of the god Hercules or Helith since that time. The exact age of the Cerne Giant is unknown, but since the past five years has seen the Uffington White Horse age about 1,000 years, it is important not to get caught up in these fundamental arguments.



Baal Revealed
'Here come I, Beelzebub,
And over my shoulders I carry a club.'
Christmas Mummers' Play

NOTES ON GIANT HILL, CERNE ABBAS, DORSET: 30TH MAY 1996 CE

Driving down past the prehistoric settlement called Higher City, I was amazed to descend onto Giant Hill as it thrust phallically out into the surrounding valley flatlands. And now, on Giant Hill, I'm amazed at how the hills opposite all conspire to create a warm encircling around Giant Hill, though the O.S. map in no way suggests it. I'm sure that the crass carving of Mr Big Dick was only done as a last resort when the religion was in such a poor state that they needed a logo, a prehistoric Ronald McDonald to get everyone excited again. At Yelcombe Bottom to my left, rituals may have been enacted during high harvest, but the giant's placing on the other side of the hill guaranteed that passing travellers along the river Cerne would sing his praises to all that they would meet. The settlement above and also that at Higher City would most likely have tended to the area of the local Cerne Valley, but the longbarrow on Smacam Down, close to Higher City, suggests that the central shape of the Giant Hill and its surroundings was archetypal and enough to satisfy all new orders of incomers and their rituals. Again, the bliss of this place is unphotographable and barely imaginable. The later placing of the abbey in the valley, at the restless head of the penile hill, is a convincing effort to subdue former energies here. It did not succeed: Cerne Abbas and its environs are vital and ardently unashamed.

The village of Cerne Abbas is on the A352 between Dorchester and Sherbourne. The giant is on a hillside overlooking the road, at the north of the village.

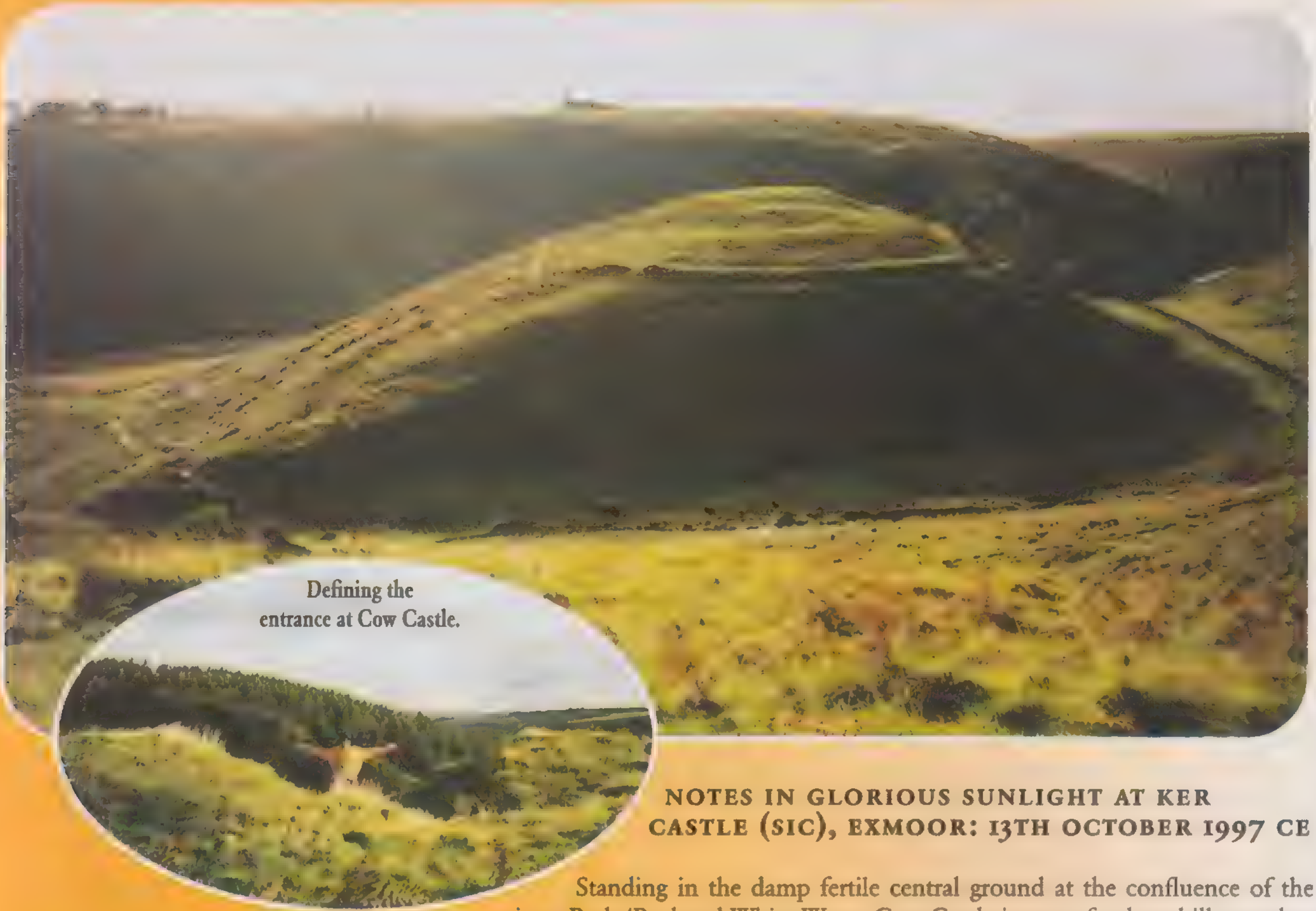
ORDNANCE SURVEY
180.794374

Cow Castle

The marvellous Cow Castle is a natural sun hill, which was subsequently marshalled into a variety of further uses. It is superbly situated in an astounding triangle of land where the rivers Barle and White Water conjoin. It really is in the middle of nowhere – far south down the pathway between Here Living and the Flexbarrow, the walker greets Cow Castle via Winstitchen farm. Others may go west and take Two Moors way to the track around Great Ferny Ball, where visitors cross the sun river Barle, aka Baal, by two bridges and climb up to the sacred enclosure. In *Megalithomania*, John Michell called Cow Castle 'an isolated conical rock, its summit encircled by a stone rampart about seven feet high'. In truth, the enclosure is slight and clearly visible only from the neighbouring hillside. The site's position has always given antiquaries and archaeologists great pause for thought, and E. J. Burrow, in his 1924 book *Ancient Earthworks of Somerset*, wrote:

> 'It is difficult to see what purpose such an inclosure served, overlooked as it is on all sides, and in a very exposed position, with a precipitous fall inside the inclosure.'

It appears more likely that the Ancients of the Iron Age utilised the site as a defensive hill mainly because of its previous associations of holiness and, therefore, sanctuary. The legend of Cow Castle mirrors its Neolithic beginning, for it was said to have been built by faeries for protection of the earth spirits.



Defining the entrance at Cow Castle.

NOTES IN GLORIOUS SUNLIGHT AT KER CASTLE (SIC), EXMOOR: 13TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

Standing in the damp fertile central ground at the confluence of the rivers Barle/Baal and White Water, Cow Castle is part of a three hill complex. The most central and longest of all closest to the confluence is the pyramid hill and the colours of autumn today pick out each contour, shadow and hue quite spectacularly. I've been snapping wildly, trying to capture atmospheres rather than what is truly in front of my lens. I wandered around for an hour or so before choosing this place overlooking all three natural monuments on the hillside at the east. John Michell has suggested that Cow Castle would have provided only rudimentary protection, but I disagree. It acts as a natural amphitheatre but is also a remarkably steep climb whilst holding camera bags, etc. Only the unarmed invader would have reached the heights of Cow Castle unhindered. This place was clearly a place of ritual and deep importance far before any defensive roll began!

Travel to Simonsbath, on the B3223. Cross river Barle at bridge, signposted 'South Moulton 11'. Continue uphill for under two miles, then take left turn signposted 'Wintershead and Horsen'. Continue until road peters out. Follow footpath signs marked 'Cow Castle'.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
195.969125 TO 184.040193

Dorset Cursus & Ackling Dyke

The stupendous six mile long Dorset cursus began on Week Street Down and travelled north-easterly parallel with the modern A354 but over half a mile south of it. Populated with earthen longbarrows, the cursus began on top of a hill following a downward course for its first mile. Continuing slowly uphill once again, at Gussage Hill, the cursus has a longbarrow built sideways-on directly within its path, whilst just below, the original Bronze Age semi-circular shape of Down farm has been retained into modern times.

Sadly, the Dorset Cursus was only discovered through aerial photography, and travellers to the area should understand that they are largely dealing with a ghost, visible only here and there. It was a huge construction – parallel banks and external ditches around 100 yards apart strung out over hillside and vale – though most of its length is sadly now ploughed out. The best physical examples of the cursus is found where it is meanly bisected by the huge Ackling Dyke Roman road on Wyke Down, the Ackling Dyke continuing unmerrily on to Badbury Rings.[G]

See Dorset Cursus Romanised, Chapter 10, page 137.

NOTES FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE DORSET CURSUS, WEEKSTREET DOWN, DORSET: 29TH MAY 1996 CE

Today, I'm standing at the beginning of this six-mile spectacular, dumbfounded by the work involved and tripped out that it became ploughed away. It's another misty day as I crouch in the hedge overlooking North farm. There's no real pathway here so I shall have to drive up to where the cursus is crossed by the Roman road ... (The Dorset Cursus peters out on Thickthorn Down) ... I'm now on the other side of the road and on the other side of the ridge. The O.S. says the cursus ends at the road, but it actually travels 200 yards further and with some physical remains.

NOTES ON THE CURSUS, TRIPPING OUT, WYKE DOWN, DORSET: 29TH MAY 1996 CE

Whoa! After walking the Ackling Dyke Roman road down to where it cuts through the cursus, I was intent on following the ploughed-out route all the way to the Sixpenny Handley Monkton Up Wimborne Road. Now I'm there after seeing the cursus buzzing in and out as a crop mark. Look to the longbarrows on Gussage Hill, and a hazy pair of marks will reveal their parallel tracks, sometimes caught in similar growth patterns of the grass or caught in the light.

From Blandford Forum, take the A354 towards Combe Bissett and Salisbury. After nine miles, see signpost for Sixpenny Handley left at roundabout. Turn right! Continue along the road for under half a mile to where the road cuts through a great bank, or agger. This is the Ackling Dyke. Park. Walk south downhill along the agger until you meet the trees. Here is the crossing point of the cursus. An O.S. is advised for true understanding.

Figsbury Ring

With endless north-westerly views over the Bourne Valley, Figsbury Ring is a mystery. It is what J. Foster Forbes, the 1930s BBC broadcaster and occult writer, called a 'Tun-hill' and a 'Ringed Hill of Wessex'. With all the dressings of an Iron Age camp, no solid evidence of permanent settlement has ever been found here, though a fine Bronze Age sword was discovered hereabouts in 1704. William Stukeley refered to Figsbury by its then current alternative 'Chlorus' Camp', considering the ringed hill to have been a Roman work, though there was never any evidence of this. The biggest mystery is the circular quarry ditch within the central levelled area. Archaeologists have argued that it was just dug for spoil to heighten the banks of the defences. There are two major problems with this idea – first, an unnecessary deep ditch in the central living area would have been an inconvenience and a danger to children. Secondly, why exhaust your workers by having them cart material unnecessary distances, when they could have dug from the deeply quarried defensive ditch, simultaneously heightening the banks with the spoil? This is impractical and daft. In his book *The Iron Age Hillforts of Britain*, Geoffrey Williams comments: 'You will search in vain to find another like it,' and flatly refuses to accept Figsbury Ring as either a defensive work or a settlement, proposing instead 'a ritual site'.

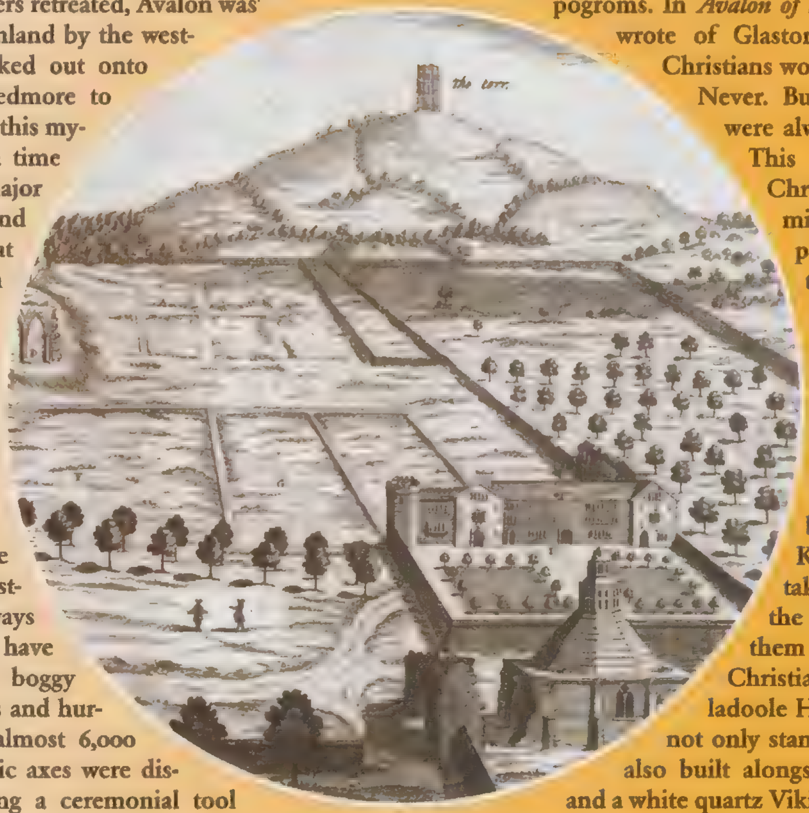
HIGH ON FIGSBURY RING, NOTES FROM THE CAUSEWAY EASTERNMOST, NEAR SALISBURY, WESSEX: SUNDOWN, 27TH JANUARY 1994 CE

We got out of the house to check on Forbes' sun-hills. Figsbury is the most intriguing of all since it has a small outer ditch, a deep inner ditch and a long regular bank that will suddenly dip to five feet in height but occasionally rise to nine or ten feet. The feeling of peace is not here completely today as those MOD bastards are royally caning everywhere with their earth-juddering gunfire. But Figsbury has me bemused. It is as featureless in its large open centre as Oliver's Camp and even more so than Uffington.[G] Its defences seem somehow perfunctory yet its inner ditch is extremely impressive, especially at the entrance where the following causeway is at its widest. The Roman road from Sarum almost reaches up to Figsbury, pausing at the valley floor, and the tall spire of Salisbury is visible to the south-west this fine but wind-shattering evening.

Figsbury Ring is signposted on the A30 to Andover, just two-and-a-half miles outside Salisbury.

Glastonbury Tor

The Keltic revivals of the 20th century hold a poetic truth so strong and accessible that people come to Glastonbury in their droves. In its low-lying watery landscape, Glastonbury Tor is essentially a representation of the Great Goddess Bridgit or Bree. Her river is dedicated to Bridgit and is called the Brue; indeed, said with a Welsh eye it would be pronounced 'Bree'. Bride's Mound stands to the east of the Tor and the hamlet of Brindham is at the north-eastern foot. In the time before the waters retreated, Avalon was only joined to the mainland by the western causeway and looked out onto the then island of Wedmore to the north-east. Imagine this mysterious landscape at a time when travelling was a major undertaking by boat, and you will begin to grasp at the timeless peace which this area invoked. Glastonbury's Tor itself and the satellites around it were the only areas of land raised above the water. There was a 'lake village' at Glastonbury and various small communities to the west at Meare and Westhay. Wooden trackways between these places have been discovered in the boggy landscape made of pegs and hurdles first cut to size almost 6,000 years ago. Two Neolithic axes were discovered here, one being a ceremonial tool imported from Brittany, whilst there has been a great deal of discovery of other Neolithic tools in the area. Of course, Glastonbury is surrounded by other Neolithic sites, such as the Priddy Circles to the near north and the henge at Gorsey Bigbury.



ABOVE: The Tor from William Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* of 1724

At Glastonbury, legend says that the great stones of the sun circle were cast down from the hill and used to make the foundations of Glastonbury Abbey. There is no proof of stones on the Tor, but the spiral walk and remains of stones around its foot suggest pre-Iron Age/pre-defensive sculptures. But there are no Neolithic remains left at Glastonbury, the megaliths most likely having been purged long ago, picked off one by one in any number of Christian pogroms. In *Avalon of the Heart*, Dion Fortune wrote of Glastonbury: 'When did the Christians worship upon high places? Never. But such mounts as this were always sacred to the Sun.' This is untrue. The early Christians were actually mistaken for sunworshippers by the Romans. And the Keltic Christianity of the early saints of these islands was a fastidious mix of old style Paganism combined with lots of personal magic. Early Christianity only succeeded because of its early Keltic saints' abilities to take on the magicians of the Keltic kings and beat them hands down. The early Christian earth-chapel on Balladoole Hill on the Isle of Man[G] not only stands upon a hill, but was also built alongside a Bronze Age kist and a white quartz Viking longship burial. The early Christians worshipped wherever there was a congregation, so the early Church had to put on an equally fine show that was even more convincing than the Pagan magicians against whom their magical talents were pitted. Glastonbury is a sacred hill of incredible meaning and spectacular views indeed, only Dunnideer in Aberdeenshire rivals this hill for sheer power of place.

NOTES AT THE WATERFALL OF THE CHALICE WELL, GLASTONBURY, SOMERSET, ENGLAND: 28TH MAY 1993 CE

A tumbling waterfall drowns the sound of people talking, sheep being sheared and Miss Albany calling for water. The lion tap feeds a continuous stream into a glass which we all drank from and filled Albany's bottle with. She became intoxicated and had to be appeased… Today … the arrival was so extraordinary. The Tor stood out for miles and charmed me all the way here. Now, we sit at the foot of the Tor at the Well where legend says Joseph of Arimathea came. The water is delicious and we filled our large Thermos, too… I think about the joy of many thousands of people who sat where I am now sitting. Many will have travelled many thousands of miles, others will be comparatively ignorant of the traditions as they have been repeated for so long. But this water is a unifying and ecstatic force – its presence … ultimately transports us through/across time.

On the A361, between Street and Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury Tor is visible for miles around.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
GOLDEN CAP 193.542947/EGGARDUN 194.407922

Golden Cap & Eggardun

A view of Golden Cap.

It is one thing to talk of great stone cairns on hilltops, and sacred hills which interrelate, but we Moderns were reared on One-Way-Systems and are now born to follow. An uppercrusty named Jeeves from Pictish Huntly once stated flatly to me that people will go nowhere without a sign nowadays. This is a clear possibility, I'm sure. City driving involves almost ritual disorientation of the driver, and at pilgrimages to these sacred sites the landscape relationships must be carefully checked out and understood. Standing on Eggardun is itself a survey of everything, including pilgrims themselves. For Eggardun opens out the mind, and from this supernatural perch the great head and figure of Golden Cap lie regally to the south-west like some great ancient ship about to be launched into the sea. Eggardun has always been a place of great mystery and locals still show incredible respect to the hill, claiming anything of great antiquity to be 'as old as Eggardun'. It is a many stage hilltop with a large henge at its heart with an internal ditch and two entrances at the north-west and south-east. This ancient hill has become a place of mischief and psychic events in the 20th century and a man told the newspapers that he had been chased across Eggardun by the Devil in 1953. In the 1960s, several times drivers experienced their cars stalling on Eggardun, then, in the late summer of 1974, a driver passing Eggardun witnessed a blueish light in front of him. A reputation for ghosts has entered the hill's folklore.

Arriving at Golden Cap, the drama of the hill is reduced because of forestry comission car parks which allow travellers to park on Langdon Hill, which is the 'figure/body' itself. But the walk south to the head of the figure, Golden Cap, is an invigorating thrill. Walk to the edge of Langdon Hill and look to the great natural sea altar of Golden Cap. St. Gabriel's church, a tiny ancient cell of a place, was built in the north-western lea of Golden Cap, which stretches out into the sea, the great strip of beach flapping out like wings on either side of this headland. At the Valley of Stones,^{G} thirteen miles east, where all the building stone came from for the local megalithic monuments, Golden Cap rises like a distant ghost. And at Marshwood, the church reveals its Pagan roots with its dramatic siting on Golden Cap, which peeps out between the significant Hardown Hill and Chardown Hill. Marshwood church is at 193.383996.

On Golden Cap

[illegible]

EGGARDUN! NOTES IN THE SUN AND THE WIND OVERLOOKING THE SOUTH COAST AND FOREVER: 27TH MAY 1996 CE

Speechless I am and that's a fact. These past ten minutes, I have stared out on to the wonderland to my east, south and north, and I have been too tripped out to move. This land is exquisite, so multi-layered as to take me beyond on this ultra-windy hillside. All across my western sights are sacred hills as big as Tap O'Noth and one in particular stands out with the same shape and the same awe-inspiring blackness. [This was my first and ignorant sighting of Golden Cap.] … Now, I shall investigate Eggardun and press on. The infinite horizon calls to me…

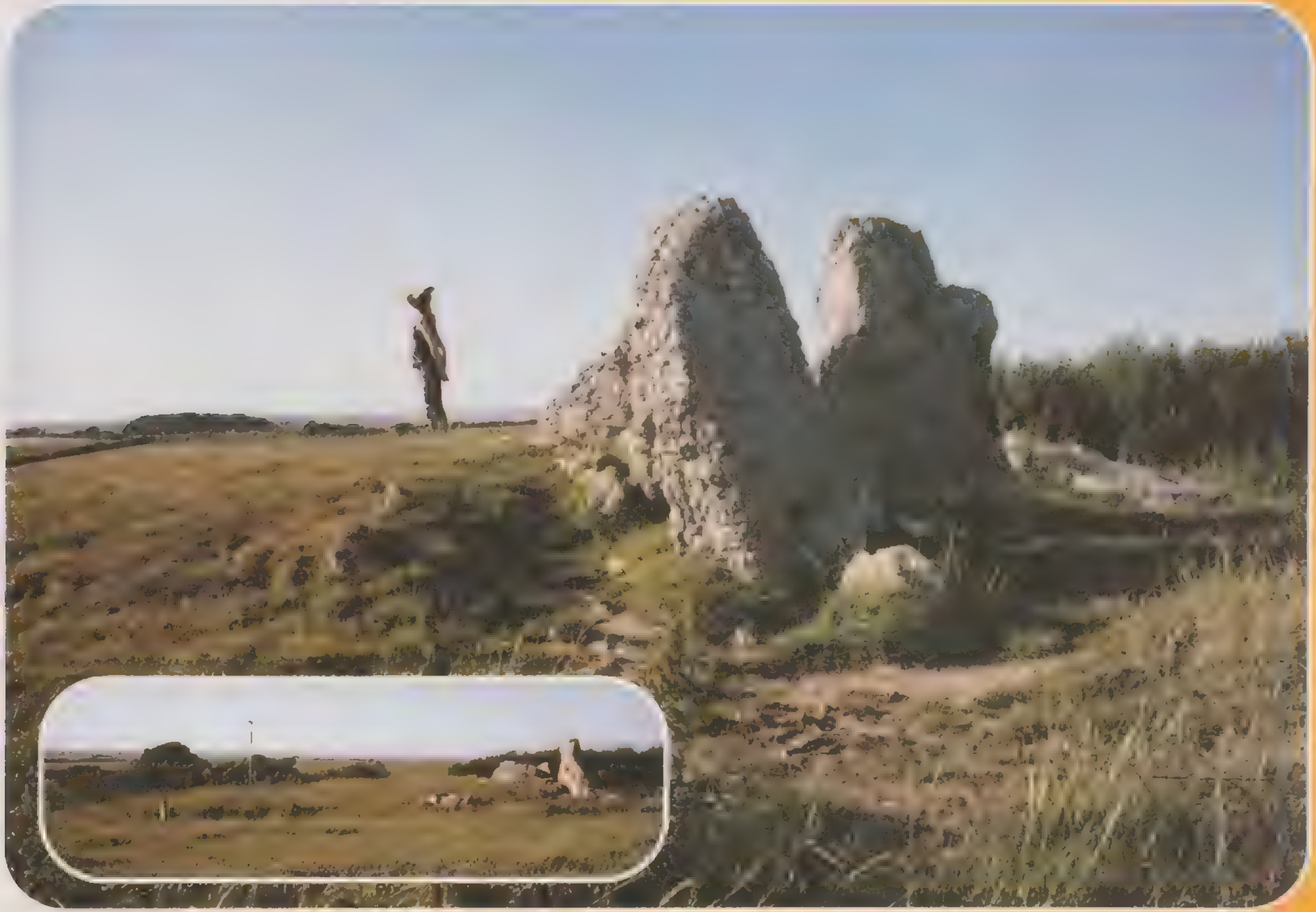
Take the main road east out of Powerstock and continue until you have climbed to the highest plateau around. Eggardon is on your right. Golden Cap is signposted on the A35 between Lyme Regis and Bridport. Both sites are in most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.584871

2 b) 9

The Grey Mare & her Colts

The battered longbarrow called the Grey Mare and her Colts is still a fine Neolithic relic despite the destruction of its chambers and the shortening of its long mound. Its original shape was like a smaller West Kennett Longbarrow^G and that basic form is still retained. The longbarrow is now around sixty-five feet long and over forty feet wide. As recently as 1960, the mound was described in Nicholas Thomas' *Prehistoric England* as being five feet high, but this is sadly no longer the case, three feet being closer to the truth. In his *Ancient Stones of Dorset*, Peter Knight suggests a processional way from an ancient enclosure and tumulus through Kingston Russell stone circle across to the Grey Mare and following past the Hampton Hill stone circle to the Hellstone dolmen.^G



NOTES FROM THE GREY MARE AND HER COLTS, NR ABBOTSBURY, DORSET: 22ND JULY 1995 CE

Like an imperfect scale model, or a kiddies' toy with all its attendant proportional aberrations, the Grey Mare rests in her field, a fabulous curiosity and yet still a valuable sacred site. I have been here now for quite a while, and the situation of this great monument is such that it could be reduced to Lugburg's dishevelment and still be a whole afternoon's hang... The view down to the sea is so tranquil and the Abbotsbury^G hillside is so intriguing. I wandered over to the other field beyond where the longbarrow would have been discovered, were it any longer, but centuries of ploughing make all analysis impossible. The SW-facing barrow possibly suggests a midwinter sunrise at the chamber's entrance and the whole place has a pastoral beauty like Wayland's Smithy,^G Belas Knap^G and Hetty Pegler's Tump.^G The huge stones here are made of a strange conglomerate with flint and white quartz pebbles embedded in their strange concrete vastness. The sun is low and piercing in its late evening low penetration...

The Grey Mare & her Colts require an O.S. map.

2 b) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.(HELL)605867/(VALL)598875

The Hellstone & the Valley of Stones

The fine Hellstone dolmen stands on Portesham Hill, the only true dolmen in the area and happily resurrected last century. In 1774, the antiquary John Hutchins described the stones as having a sixty foot long terrace, and his illustration shows the remains of a long mound supporting the stones. By 1860, the stones had collapsed. They were re-erected in 1866, though some claim that it was an inaccurate job. Now, the stones are part of a thick field wall or partition, which actually enhances the site. Across the site to the south stands another prehistoric mound, a drystone wall bisecting it. Near the crossroads on Portesham Hill is the centre from which all the great stone monuments were made. At the Valley of Stones, only 200 yards to the west of the crossroads, a scattering of natural large deposited stone provided the Dorset megalith builders with equal amounts of inspiration as the Mother's Jam[G] at Avebury.[G] Standing on the side of the Valley of Stones, it is possible to see the sacred and full figure of Golden Cap[G] exactly thirteen miles away.

ANTIQUARIAN NOTES AT THE HELLSTONE CROMLECH, PORTESHAM HILL, DORSET: EVENING, 28TH MAY 1996 CE

I'm sitting under the capstone of this beautiful cromlech, wondering which part is a reconstruction. The chamber is large and the capstone flies over my head as the entrance remains in its original position at the south-eastern end of the barrow which trails behind the chamber, bisected by a field wall and soon tapering off where the ploughed field takes over… Tonight the sheep eye me suspiciously as they fade in and out of this foggy hilltop.

NOTES IN THE VALLEY OF STONES, OVERLOOKING CROW HILL, DORSET: 30TH MAY 1996 CE

Here is the blissful centre of this whole megalithic area. A great open 'U', a crescent moon of a valley, arcs around Crow Hill with a great slurry of stones at the bottom. I say 'great slurry', though most at the northern end have now been removed for use in just about every ceremonial and secular building project in the locale. Keltic walls climb the sides of the Valley of Stones and round barrows vie with the gorse for position on the slopes. Far to the west-north-west looms the sacred hill of Eggardun,[G] black and mysterious. It commands this area, though it was in this valley that the oracle stones began and where the Mesolithic people most likely came for their visions.

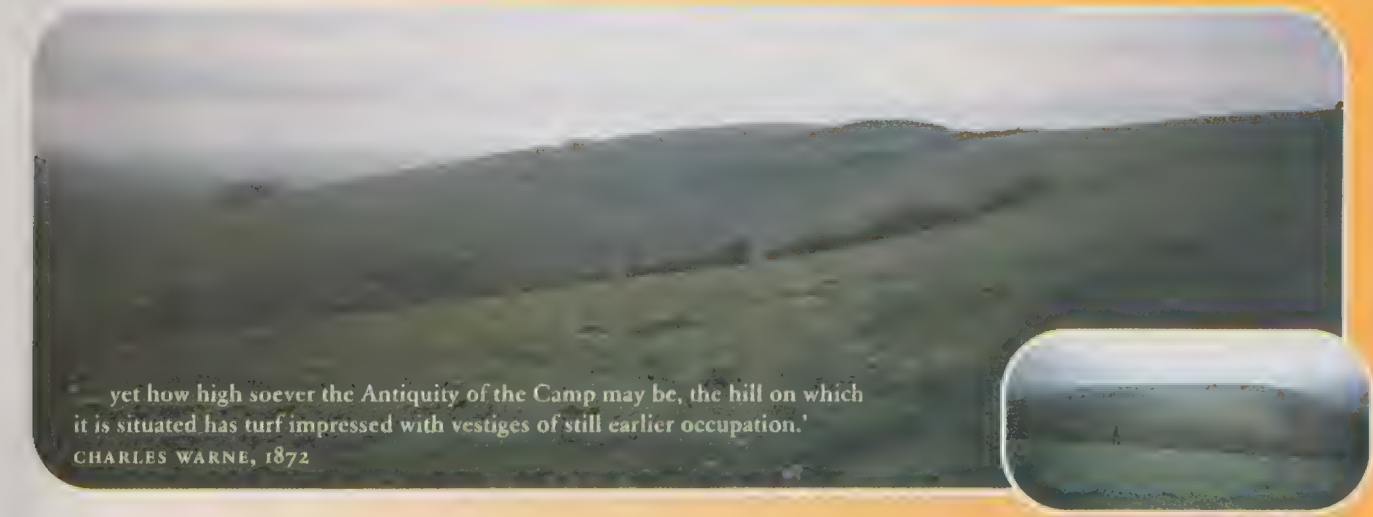
From Winterbourne Abbas, on the A35, take the Portesham road south for under three miles, until you cross the Abbotsbury–Martinstown road. At this point, the Valley of Stones is the sheer drop on your immediate right. Do not park here. Instead, continue straight on until a barn appears on the left and park here. From the barn, set off boldly east across the field, following the wire fence. The Hellstone is about three fields away – helpfully beside a signpost.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.(HAM)845125/(HOD)857107

2 b) 11

Hambledon & Hod Hill

In the magical land at the spectacular confluence of the rivers Stour and Iwerne rise the magnificent Hambledon and Hod Hill. The exhilarating climb leads to unnerving views across the Stour Valley, and from the Neolithic enclosure on Hambledon, the traveller takes in a mind-blowing south-westerly view of the ridge of hills leading down to Wooland and Bulbarrow. We are here in the land of Wer, as shown by the two villages Iwerne Minster and Iwerne Courtney, and the land is a righteous beauty from here to the eternal horizon. On excavation, the Neolithic causewayed enclosure showed evidence of great ritual and the finds have been dated to around 2800 BCE. The enclosure was a large construction of defensive earthworks, a great timber-reinforced rampart. As long ago as 2700 BCE, the builders of Hambledon used between 10,000 and 20,000 timbers for their work – the same amount cut down for the building of the Newbury bypass. It appears to have been a wasteful Neolithic society, quite at odds with other contemporary finds. The excavator of the site, Roger Mercer, described the people of Hambledon as having 'feasted' rather than eaten, because they had left great unfinished joints of meat all over the floor, and simply threw away unappealing parts of the animal. The most touching discovery at Hambledon was the evidence of Neolithic warfare. A skeleton was found – a young man had been running, carrying a small child to safety. He had been shot in the back and fell, crushing the child, who died suffocated beneath his weight. There are two longbarrows, one of which is over 240 feet in length and surmounts the humpback of the Iron Age enclosure. Near the Steepleton cross-dykes stands the other longbarrow, which is almost 100 feet long. But all is now swamped by the sheer size of the twenty-five acres of deep Iron Age defences on Hambledon and its 'overspill town' neighbour on Hod Hill. The Iron Age was a time of real population explosion. But despite the more recent (500 BCE) earthworks, both Hambledon and Hod Hill suggest times far further back than even the Stone Age, and it is easy to imagine agricultural Humanity as latecomers when spending time in contemplation on Hambledon.



'… yet how high soever the Antiquity of the Camp may be, the hill on which it is situated has turf impressed with vestiges of still earlier occupation.'
CHARLES WARNE, 1872

NOTES FROM THE NEOLITHIC CAUSEWAYED ENCLOSURE ON HAMBLEDON, CHILD OKEFORD, DORSET: 29TH MAY 1996 CE

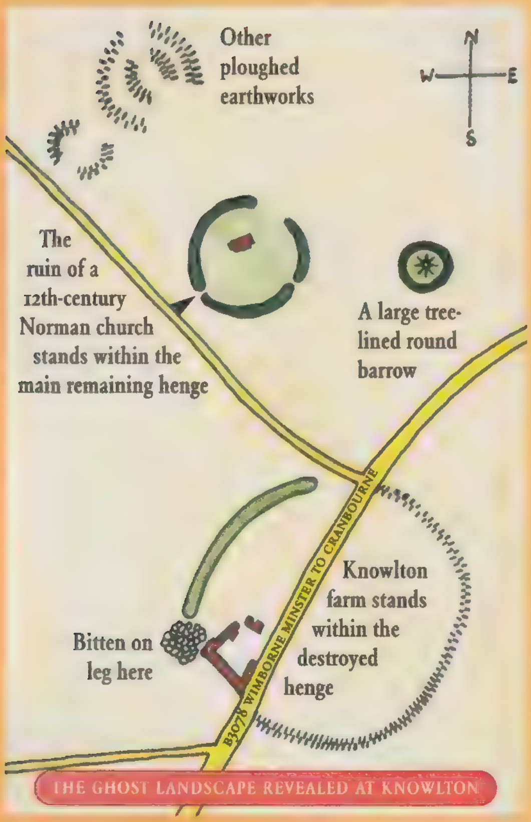
I'm trying to photograph feelings, an impossible thing because of the intensity of peace and infinity up here. I want to thrust the shots into people's hands and shout: 'There. Feel that!' But I know it's not to be. Too many years of blurred tour snaps from people crossing huge bridges on buses has made me wary. But I'm really desperate for people to see this place. Like Adam's Grave,^{G} Hambledon looks out onto many aspects of infinity. No wonder the Romans felt the need to keep this place in check; it is a bizarre amalgam of all the sweetest views combined with a hill (now hillfort) of massive intensity. Was Hambledon always so dark? Without the ugly Iron Age sculpturings, she would have been so beautiful. And here in the lea of the Mother, Neolithic Man would have maintained his tradition of semi-controlling his environment but still hiding and holding onto his Mother's apron strings at the same time. It's a special one indeed, a sheer magical heaven. In 1996 CE, the place is the same as it ever was. Grandma Cope always told me, when she was ten years old, around the turn of the century (20th century), how no-one had vehicles, how no-one went anywhere, how she arrived at her wedding on a motorbike. Yet here, despite the chaos all around, there is time ebbing, flowing and passing, as it always has. Ah, peace! Get a little!

Hod Hill stands in the V-shape of roads created at the junction between the A350 from Blandford Forum to Shaftesbury and the A357 from Shillingstone. Climb Hod Hill first – Hambledon stands beside it.

2 b) 12

ORDNANCE SURVEY
195.024103

Knowlton Henges


Other ploughed earthworks
N
W
E
S
The ruin of a 12th-century Norman church stands within the main remaining henge
A large tree-lined round barrow
B3078 WIMBORNE MINSTER TO CRANBOURNE
Knowlton farm stands within the destroyed henge
Bitten on leg here

THE GHOST LANDSCAPE REVEALED AT KNOWLTON

The Knowlton henges stand in flat fertile farmland in an area of extraordinary prehistoric activity. To the north-west, the Dorset Cursus[G] came to its conclusion on Thickthorn Down, whilst Badbury Rings[G] to the south-west were bombarded by Roman roads. One of the henges at Knowlton is the site of a modern farm nowadays. Though it is possible to pick out the shape of some of the henge banks, now etched in old tyres, for some the general disorientation of having a working farm around them will prove too much. At the main henge, whilst two large and magical yew trees sprout from the north-east bank of the henge, a ruined Norman church stands forlornly at the centre. Some of the corner slabs of the church tower look frighteningly megalithic. It was R. Hippisley-Cox, in his 1914 *The Green Roads of England*, who first suggested that the stones used for the church itself 'once formed the stone circles of a sun temple', and this idea is hard to shake when the church is so viewed. Fairs and meetings, or 'hundreds', took place here over centuries and Peter Knight has suggested that the church erected here was to dissuade revelry. The henge is over 100 yards across and had banks up to six feet high, though they are now somewhat lower. The original ditches were, upon excavation, discovered to have been over seventeen feet deep. Within the area of Knowlton henges, over forty large barrows have been recorded. Looking east-north-east is a tree-covered mound in the midst of agriculture – this is the Great Barrow, formerly ringed by a deep ditch and bank, and a huge monument in its own right. Knowlton in its pristine period would have been an apparently endless crop-covered plain of aligned mounds and henges.

NOTES LATE AFTERNOON AT KNOWLTON HENGES, DORSET: 29TH MAY 1996 CE

And up we go! I'm lying under those beautiful trees at the east of the henge, chilling or attempting to after being bitten on the leg by a savage beast. I drove into Knowlton farm, which is built within the earthworks and, bang, some great canine wrapped its jaws around my right leg and shredded me. Still, Knowlton is that strange ghost of a site: the Norman church looking frankly idiotic and in awe of its surroundings, the barrow henge now surplanted with trees and the back and ditch gone whilst the south circle is no more than a receptacle for a stinking farm... But this henge is far better ... has a classic horizon nearly all level and perfect for the illusion of the amphitheatre within the natural amphitheatre of land. And here, with bitten leg beneath the two trees, I am spaced oot!

Knowlton is on the B3078, between Wimborne Minster and Fordingbridge. Approaching from the south, look out for the church on the left. Take the first left after the big smelly farm.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.670884

2 b) 13

Maiden Castle

Visible all across the horizons, yet slinky and harmonious within the landscape, Maiden Castle was the great source of power for all those Neolithic river travellers arriving down the Frome. And though the hill's most dominant features are the Iron Age defensive sculptures, it was far before, around 4300, BCE that Neolithic colonisation began here with the arrival of domestic animals and agriculture. The first causewayed enclosure was built at the east of the hilltop and was discovered by Mortimer Wheeler in 1934. Unfortunately, the brutal Iron Age construction destroyed most of the earlier periods of digging, though some did survive. But over 21,000 flint tools were discovered in the ditch, including 180 which 'had been carefully worked to a predetermined shape'. Scrapers and arrowheads were also found in profusion, but the dominant discovery is of flint discarded during the making of tools. Maiden Castle's Neolithic period was one of intense productivity. The only tools not made of flint were seventeen axe-heads, ten of them Cornish. The most impressive Neolithic feature was the huge Bank Barrow almost 1,800 feet long, which follows the spine of the hill. It began as a longbarrow but was later enlarged to this stupendous size, and is unique in the British Isles. In the late Neolithic, activities lessened and archaeologists are of the opinion that the site became a temporary boundary line. The full Iron Age hilltop is a forty-five acre construction, with a full mile-and-a-half path around the inner circumference. Three thousand years after the Neolithic, Maiden Castle was overrun by the Romans.

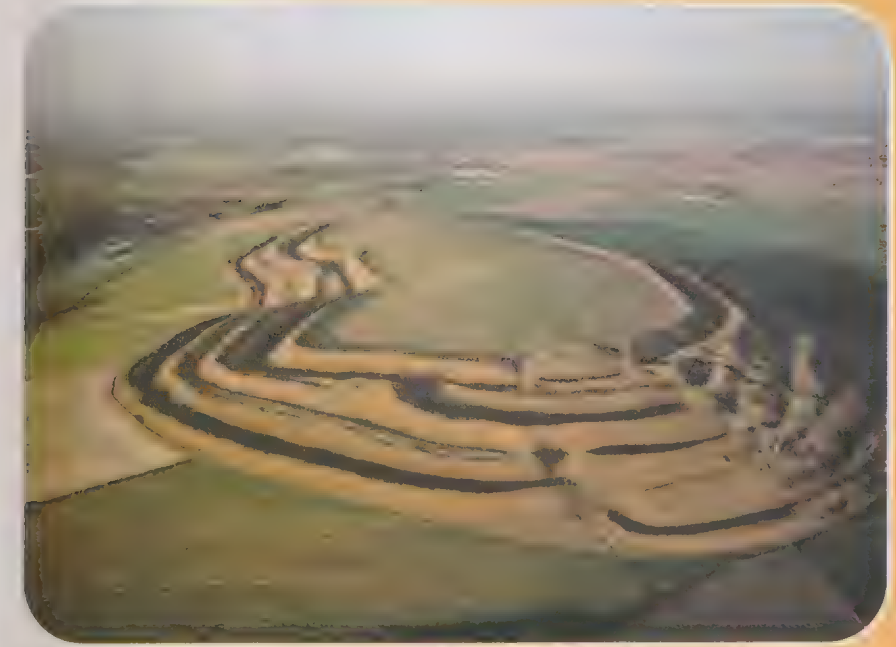


Photo © English Heritage/Skyscan Balloon Photography

NOTES FROM THE MAIDEN IN THICK FOG, DORSET: 25TH MAY 1996 CE

I'm in thick fog surrounded by sheep in a heavy penetrating wind on the north slope of this Mother mountain during a strange Bank Holiday where autumn/winter/spring/summer all coagulate into one. Perhaps fog is the best thing for a first visit to the Maiden. Last year, I explored her position on the landscape and, truly, were the fog to lift right now I would be less mystically inclined by the ring road around Dorchester and the ever-creeping development along the Neolithic road towards the Maiden, stopping only for 100 or so yards from Maiden Castle farm. Like Sarum, the formidable depth of the layer hillfort overshadows the original hill, yet at the eastern end of the hill, the ramparts of the first Iron Age hillfort follow the line of the original causewayed enclosure. Earlier, I sat at one of the two dew ponds (the easternmost) and, out of the wind, I almost went to sleep. The exposure of this magical hill is something else.

Maiden Castle is clearly visible from the southern A35 ring road which skirts around Dorchester. Where the A35 meets the A354 from Weymouth, take the road north for Dorchester town centre. Half a mile up this road, Maiden Castle is signposted on the left.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
MAUMBURY RING: 194.691899

Maumbury Ring & Mount Pleasant

William Stukeley's illustrations from his *Itinerarium Curiosum* of 1776 showed Maumbury Ring to have been far out of the city of Dorchester with wide views to the east and west. But now, 200 years later, the henge has been swallowed up as the city ate the countryside for a further mile beyond this huge ancient earthwork. But Maumbury must have grown used to mistreatment and compromise over the years, for it was later further defined by the Romans who used it as an amphitheatre, sculpting its banks until they were steep and tremendous. Finally, the henge became a Civil War gun emplacement in the mid-1600s, and this is still visible at the opposite side to the original north-eastern entrance, which at that time still had one of its large standing stones remaining. The huge depth of these original inner ditches has been remarked upon. They have been measured as up to thirty-five feet deep in their original state. The prehistorian Nicholas Thomas has suggested that their immense size must have been an intentional feature of the site, for the effect was achieved by digging a series of forty-five individual shafts around the inner area, all around thirteen feet across and some over thirty feet deep – more than the depths discovered at Avebury. Continuing the site's ever-changing uses, in 1766, Maumbury Ring became a place of execution when the murderess Mary Channing was publicly strangled and burned for poisoning her husband.

Maumbury Ring.

Finds from Maumbury can be seen at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. These included a number of 'remarkable phallic carvings in chalk'.

A visit to the great former henge of Mount Pleasant will nowadays see the visitor sent to a barren hilltop close to the confluence of the rivers Frome and South Winterborne. But closer inspection is worthwhile for the importance of Mount Pleasant's position, and the remaining Conquer Barrow, which used to stand on the henge's most westerly bank, is still a fine tree-grown summit on which to contemplate the vast changes of the area. The oval earthwork was once about 400 yards across, around the same size as Avebury,[G] and excavations by Geoffrey Wainwright in 1967 showed that the entire hilltop had once been lined with an enormous timber wall almost six feet wide and nearly ten feet deep. Grooved Ware pottery was recovered from the ditch along with flint scrapers, a chalk ball, eleven antler picks, and the bones of birds, foxes, sheep, deer, dogs and cattle. A large timber structure once stood within the western part of the enclosure, close to the Conquer Barrow. This was later replaced by a large setting of standing stones, which were themselves destroyed when the ground was ploughed flat to facilitate agriculture. Mount Pleasant's hilltop site and the still tall Conquer Barrow are found at O.S. 194.710899 and 708899.

MUSH NOTES ATOP THE CONQUER BARROW OVERLOOKING MOUNT PLEASANT HENGE (REMAINS), EAST OF DORCHESTER: 26TH MAY (4 ISH) 1996 CE

Walking across the hilltop where the mighty henge once stood, it is hard not to be awed by the view from Mt Pleasant. This was a formidable place during the Neolithic and such is the remaining power, the Conquer Barrow is a wild and undisturbed place more akin to the major remaining pond-barrow up on the hill between the Sanctuary[G] and West Kennett Avenue. Both barrows are massively overgrown with trees and always soaking undergrowth, yet this Conquer Barrow is abutted on its western side by a strangely timeless housing estate built in good-looking granite; though I wouldn't be saying that if I'd seen the builders putting the bastards up! Maumbury is only just over a mile west of Mt Pleasant but the city has approached so close as to swallow up the original pathways and obscure routes of Neolithic humanity…

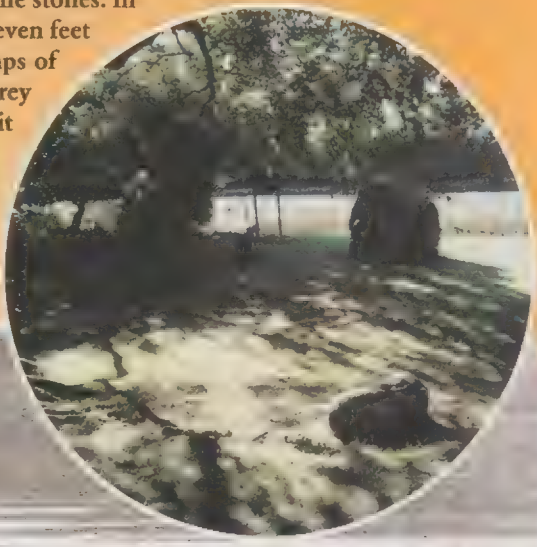
Approach Dorchester from the Weymouth direction, along the A354. Where the A35 crosses your path, continue straight over the roundabout and head for the town centre. Continue along this road for under a mile and come to traffic lights over a railway track. Turn right at these lights – Maumbury Ring is directly on the left.

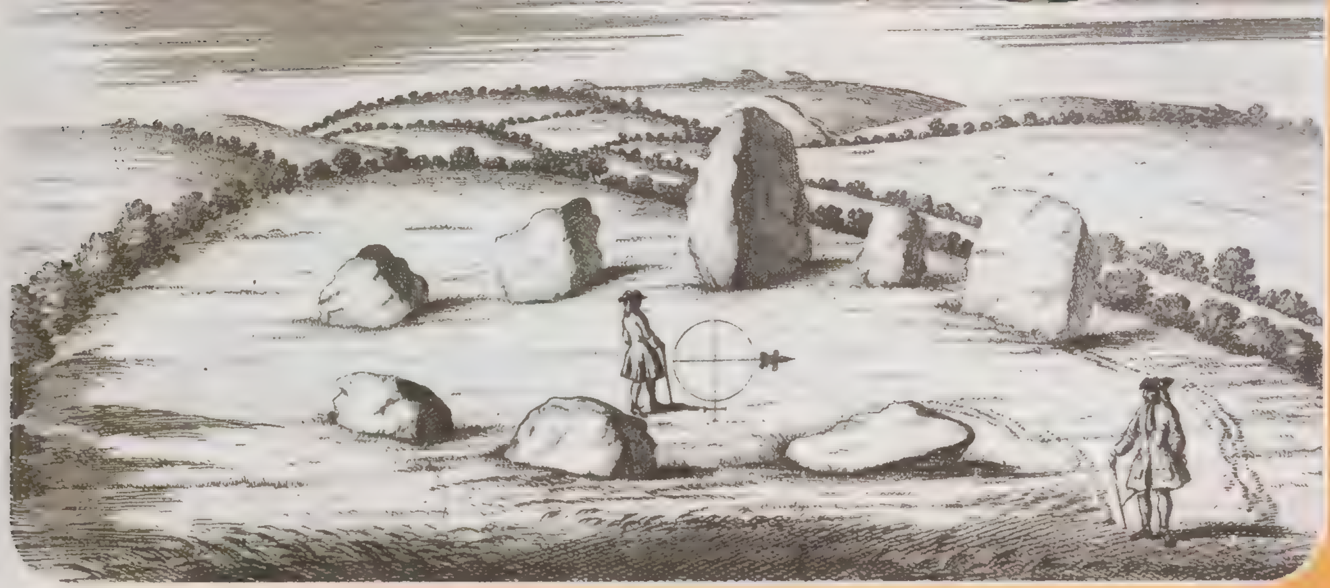
ORDNANCE SURVEY
194.611903

2 b) 15

The Nine Stones of Winterbourne Abbas

It is such a shame that the Nine Stones stand so very close to the A35 main road. Engravings from William Stukeley's 1776 *Itinerarium Curiosum* show an open landscape with a fine stone circle, but nowadays the stones have to cling to the floor of their wooded copse. In his *Ancient Stones of Dorset*, Peter Knight has commented on the circle's similar position in a shallow valley to the Rempstone circle on the Isle of Purbeck.[G] The Nine Stones are like a highly exaggerated Perthshire stone circle, with massive gradings in the heights of the stones. In this tiny ellipse no more that ten paces across, the stones range from eleven feet high to under three feet. John Aubrey called the stones 'petrified clumps of flints', which aptly describes this conglomerate concrete effect. Aubrey also mentioned another stone circle 'half a mile further westwards', but it is now gone. No mention did he make of the Broad Stone, an enormous natural altar beside the road which William Stukeley drew in the background of his Nine Stones illustration fifty years later. But at that early stage, before the destruction of the megaliths, there was already far too much in the area for one visit.





THE NINE STONES OF WINTERBOURNE ABBAS, NOTES IN SUNLIGHT: 12TH MAY 1996 CE

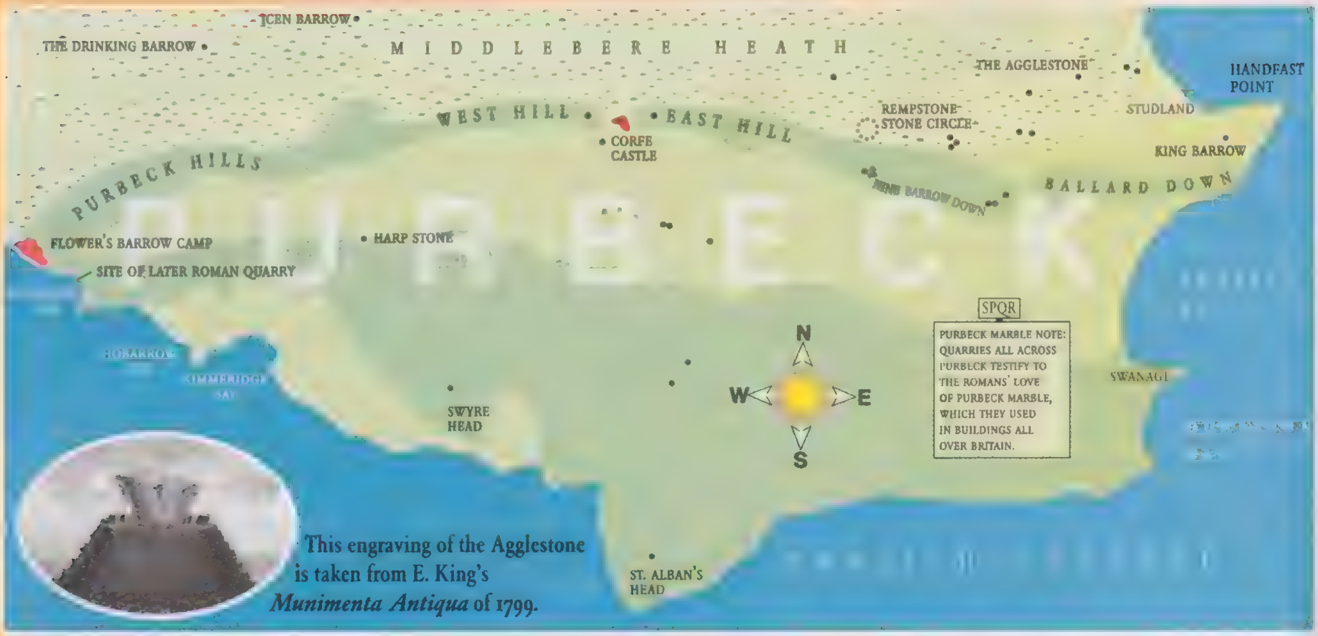
In the bliss of this sunny day, the rush of the traffic fades as the shadows of these trees increase. The Nines Stones are today like flat bakestones, ready to cook eggs upon – though the nearby Little Chef probably summoned that thought. To jump back to Stukeley's time would be such a delight, to that open road with its gently approaching horses and visibility for miles. Instead, I'm here confined in the shade, as though in some great longbarrow, rather than at a sun circle. But who cares – I'm here again!

The Nine Stones stand on the A35, west of the village. Park at the Little Chef and walk, as there is very little roadside space.

2 b) 16

ORDNANCE SURVEY
PURBECK CENTRE 96.80

Isle of Purbeck



PURBECK MARBLE NOTE: QUARRIES ALL ACROSS PURBECK TESTIFY TO THE ROMANS' LOVE OF PURBECK MARBLE, WHICH THEY USED IN BUILDINGS ALL OVER BRITAIN.

This engraving of the Agglestone is taken from E. King's *Munimenta Antiqua* of 1799.

Non-poets and fools say that Purbeck is not really an island, being joined to the mainland by Middlebere Heath. But Middlebere Heath is a place of otherworldly forces, where the seas may appear to have been permanently parted but where, like the Biblical separating of the Red Sea, on closer examination it all turned out to be a temporary thing. A tour around Purbeck will not show you dazzling stone sites, but it will reveal in the sheer uplifting permanence of the landscape such a feeling of remove from everything that the very names of the places become more meaningful. Crossing Middlebere Heath, the mound of Corfe Castle rises up between its two hill ridges like a divine Mother hill. When I visited Corfe Castle in May 1996 CE, I saw that the castleless mound had once represented the Mother lying on her back, the East Hill and West Hill representations of the open legs and the central mound as great clitoris, womb and belly all together. Purbeck was once an island, indeed its psyche remains that of an island, and Middlebere Heath might as well be underwater for the relationship it has with the natural sacred fortress island of Purbeck. The mound, without its inappropriate mess of medieval walling, becomes the central omphalos of the ridged East and West Hills. Evidence of Bronze Age settlement at Corfe itself can be seen from the quernstone at the Corfe Museum. Following the road east at the foot of East Hill brings the traveller to the foot of Brenscombe Hill, with Rempstone stone circle at its foot, but nowadays the circle stones are hidden in deep tree growth just yards from the road. Continuing up the steep climb into Rempstone Wood brings the visitor out on Nine Barrows Down, a marvellous summit surmounted with umpteen round-barrows. Continuing to the far eastern end of Purbeck brings the visitor to the Foreland. This Pagan centre is also known as Handfast Point, a reminder of its witch marriage ceremonies conducted in the past. The area is also known as Old Nick's Ground. But the recent dinosaur footprints discovered this year, 1997 CE, puts the real time limit of Purbeck into perspective.

NOTES AT REMPSTONE IN MISTY SPRING, ISLE OF PURBECK: 28TH MAY 1997 CE

The circle is battered by all kinds of ancient and modern depredations, but mostly by the current forest and gully system in which the stones find themselves. None of the stones are large, though they do have a bulkiness which makes each one appear considerable. Yet the environment has pushed stones over, a build-up of trees and mossy banks conspiring with a blaze of flowers and weeds to create a beautiful yet haphazard atmosphere. As I walked around the remaining arc of the circle, being careful to bend low at all times, the place revealed itself to me as a special Garrol wood-like circle where the gentleness of the site and its new environment have totally taken over from the original intentions of the builders, who appear to have made entrances at the SE and NW. A hundred yards through the woods are two of the remaining southern stones. A deer freaked out to see me as I first arrived here and the traffic of the B3351 is rarely enough to destroy the birdsong.

The Isle of Purbeck is best approached via Corfe Castle, on the A351.

THE AGGLESTONE: 195.023828
CORFE CASTLE: 195.959823
FLOWER'S BARROW CAMP : 194.865805
NINE BARROWS DOWN: 195.995815
REMPSTONE STONE CIRCLE: 195.995821

ORDNANCE SURVEY
183.628252

2 b) 17

South Cadbury Castle

Standing in the heart of mythological Arthur territory, the undefended Neolithic hilltop of South Cadbury Castle was constantly occupied from around 3300 BCE until its abandonment in the Iron Age. It is a magnificent hill which rears up around 500 feet and its strange haphazard shape is visible for many miles across the countryside. Excavations between 1966 and 1970 by Leslie Alcock proved that South Cadbury's defences were in line with the Arthurian legend, and Alcock's book *By South Cadbury Is That Camelot* became a definitive work on the realisation of the mythical Arthur. But its Neolithic provenance was established at this time with the discovery of pottery, burial pits and the original antler-pick ditches. Despite the enormous area excavated, only 6 per cent of the entire camp has been uncovered. None of the excavations can now be seen by the visitor, but the original defences employed timber-box ramparts and fairly small ditches, later enlarged as the paranoia of the Iron Age drew on. South Cadbury's fame continued throughout the Roman invasion and deep into the Dark Ages, and it is likely that the final stage of occupation was not until 1020 CE, when the castle was destroyed, possibly by King Cnut or Canute.

From the summit of South Cadbury Castle, there are huge views across to Glastonbury Tor and the whole of the border country between Dorset and Somerset.

NOTES IN HIGH WIND AND MISTY RAIN AT SOUTH CADBURY CASTLE, DORSET/SOMERSET BORDER: 8TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

This is a mighty day to take on the elements here at the legendary Camelot – the wind nearly blew me off the highest bank as I stared incredulously at the great green natural earthworks of Sigwells to the near south. The hills create a marvellous enclosure like that at Milk Hill on the Marlborough Downs and Yelcombe Bottom by the Cerne Abbas Giant.^{G} The position of this ancient fortified settlement is truly beautiful, giving an unnerving view across the hills towards the mystery of Glastonbury Tor,^{G} which rises up in awesome silence as the wind punishes my ears. On clear days, the view of Glastonbury and beyond may easily be taken for granted, but today it disappears and reappears at regular intervals as I write this note under duress from the elements.

The village of South Cadbury is located just off the A303 between Sparkford and Wincanton. Pass through the village – explanation boards and so forth are at the village's southern exit.

2 b) 18

ORDNANCE SURVEY
172.(CIRCLES)600623/(COVE)597632

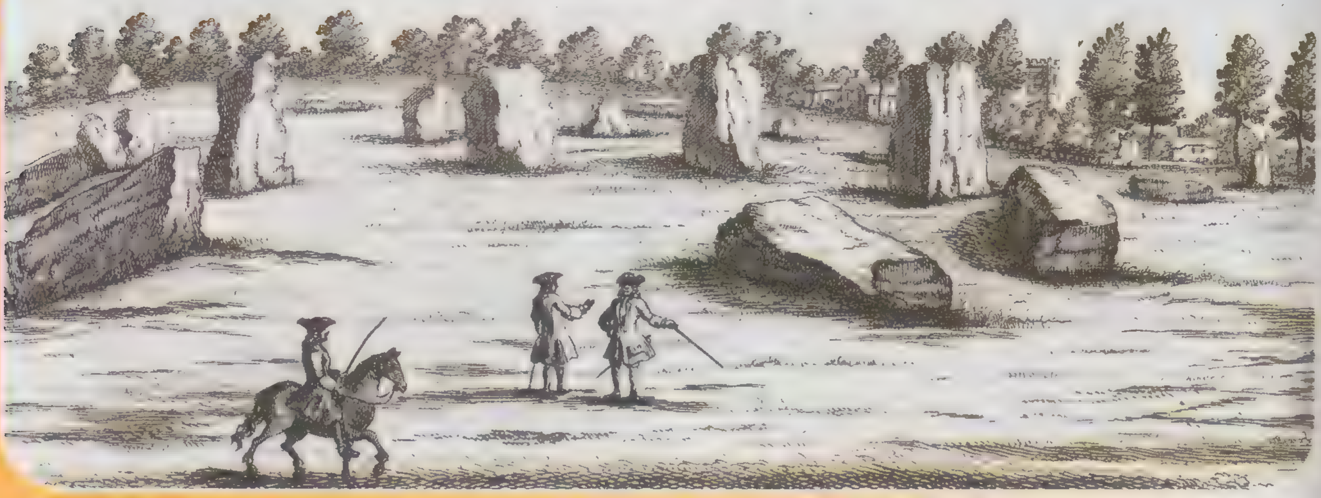
The Weddings at Stanton Drew

A great and sudden change has come over modern Stanton Drew. The discovery of a huge wooden poled henge, similar to Woodhenge and the Sanctuary,^{G} has prompted an entire change of policy and, after years of churlish behaviour, the circles of Stanton Drew are truly 'open'. Nowhere did the modern hand of Humanity so divert the attention from the prehistoric as at Stanton Drew, where the third biggest stone circle in Britain stood close to an electric fence. It was here that three stone circles stood in a line, though only two could be visited. At Stanton Drew, people would tell you to leave after a while because 'you've had your 50 pence worth'. But not any more – a new era appears to have risen. At first, the huge stones seem to be in such disarray as to not even suggest circles at all. But then it becomes clear that these gargantuan rocks of gnarled pustular breccia and weathered oolitic limestone were placed here intentionally. Three stone circles stand close by the river Chew. On the opposite bank was the ten-and-a-half foot sandstone outlier known as Hautville's Quoit, which had fallen by William Stukeley's time but was still famous in local legend and tradition. Legend has it that the Weddings, as they are traditionally known, are a party of wedding guests turned to stone for dancing on the Sabbath. The avenue stones are the Fiddlers and the rings of stone all dancers. The two standing stones of the Cove are the bride and groom, whilst the fallen stone is the drunken vicar lying on his back.

'No one, say the country People about Stantondrue, was ever able to reckon the Number of these Metamorphosed Stones, or to take a draught of them, tho' several have attempted to do both, and proceeded until they were either struck dead upon the spot, or with such an illness as soon carried them off.'

Thus wrote the Bath antiquary John Wood in his *A Particular Description of Bath*, volume 1, of 1750. Wood also noted that he himself had managed to count the stones, though the cloudburst that followed was attributed to his folly by the villagers.

From William Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiousum* of 1776 (2nd edition).



NOTES FROM STANTON DREW STONES, AVON: 16TH MAY 1991 CE

Ha. I am in love again. In love with this enormous and understated place called Stanton Drew. The stones are as large as those at Avebury,^{G} as ignored as any in Britain, and larger than Long Meg^{G} – they lie mystically and eerily, an enormous ring of recumbent beasts surrounded by curious cows, millions of buttercups and engulfed in lichen. Two circles: one huge and hoarier than Long Meg, the second smaller and [standing] alongside. And scattered around are sarsen upon sarsen and even the remains of an earthwork. Stanton Drew is dreadfully undervalued … who cares? It is a very blessed monument – and a battery of awesome size. The curious cows surround me and I wonder about William Stukeley … so many years ago. For this was a site. And this is a sight.

Stanton Drew is a village six miles south of Bristol. Approaching from that direction (A37), the stones are in the farm on the left as you cross the river into the village. The Cove is between the church and the Druid's Arms, on the other side of the village.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
172.735572

2 b) 19

Stoney Littleton

The mighty longbarrow of Stoney Littleton perches on the steep southern slopes of the fast-running Wellow Brook, in grand agricultural land quite far from the road. On this remote plateau stands one of the finest longbarrows in Britain, a great long mound 100 feet long with three pairs of megalithic chambers. These were built off a long passageway almost fifty feet in length, giving a ground plan like two united Crosses of Lorraine. Stoney Littleton is a Severn–Cotswold cairn, with its recumbent truncated Goddess form. The entranceway is a marvellous structure with an enormous and beautiful ammonite fossil on the left side of the doorway. This feature is positioned low down in the door jamb and is easily missed, though it is around fifteen inches in diameter. The Ancients themselves were clearly entranced by this mysterious antiquity. The longbarrow was first opened through the roof around 1760 by the local farmer, who was looking for road-mending material. Once open, the barrow attracted treasure-seekers, who took away all the bones and grave goods that they could carry. In May 1816, Sir Richard Colt-Hoare and his team excavated the longbarrow with their usual high speed, completing their work in a splendid two days – and all with one labourer, the much put-upon Zeberdee Watson. Unsurprisingly, the results were hurried and incomplete, but many bones were discovered – thigh, leg and jawbones, as well as piles of smashed and burnt bone. Just one week after the excavation, 'some riotous colliers' purportedly broke the closing slab as they entered the chambers and helped themselves to any leftovers still to be had. Another party of 'riotous colliers' is said to have systematically chipped off the 10th-century engravings from the Bronze Age Rhoihi stone on Gelligaer Common. The longbarrow was finally restored to its present condition in 1858, at which time a whiningly proper and self-important plaque was affixed to the low stones of the forecourt informing future generations of just how accurate and excellent were the restorations of these arrogant Victorians. If the restorations were so marvellous, why is it that since the early 1990s, the chambers of Stoney Littleton have been locked, barred and finally cemented shut? English Heritage claim that the chamber roof has become unsafe because of visitors' continued removal of the small stones surrounding the capstones. Unfortunately for locals, these authorities have chosen not to act in the barrow's greatest interests. When metal bolts were sheared off by locals, in protest against the barrow's seemingly terminal state of closure, English Heritage did not regard this as the act of worshippers desperate to return to their local temple, but as vandals disregarding an official policy. Rather than hurry the restoration, they poured cement into the chambers to ensure that egress was impossible. How wrong these officials are.

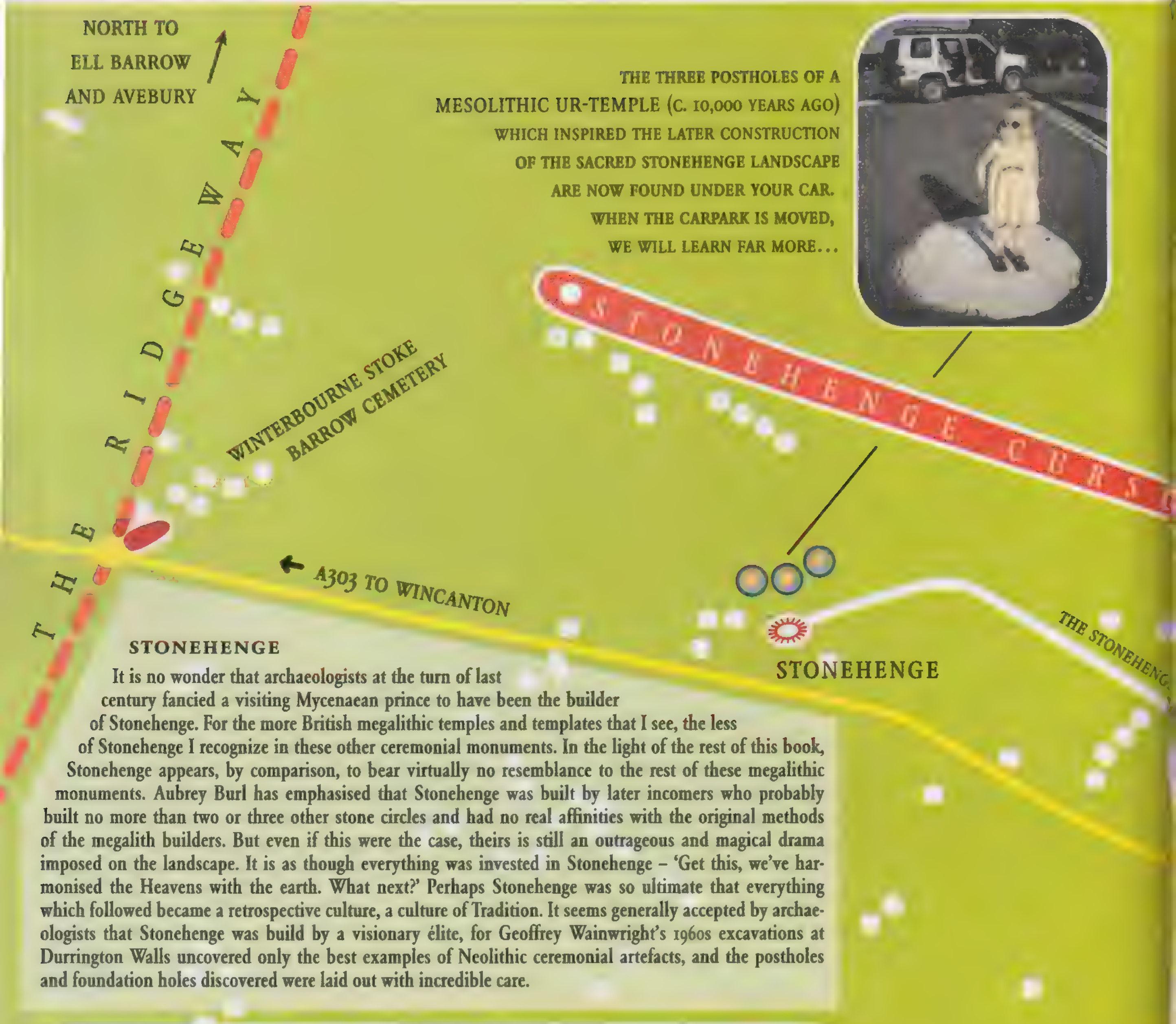
WEIRD EASTER NOTES FROM STONEY LITTLETON, SOMERSET: 12TH APRIL 1998 CE (EASTER SUNDAY)

In the high gusts of this bizarrest of Easter weekends, I sit nonplussed in front of Stoney Littleton longbarrow. The sun is staring through ragged clouds as the hillsides all around this site gleam in the sudden cloud-break. My last visit was almost six years ago, at which time our then-newborn daughter Albany was almost blown off the hillside. We were unable to shelter in the chambers, as they were being re-excavated and restored. Ha! Six long years later, there is a laughable note claiming that the work will be complete by this summer – oh cynical hacks!* The landfill site which had just been started during my last visit is now well assimilated into the scenery, though I'm not sure that general mess is any more desirable than (the previous) neat delineated clutter. Whatever, the light around this longbarrow is currently fabulous – I shall stop writing in order to observe.

*** Talking to the farmer who acts as custodian for the longbarrow, I learned that the notice of proposed completion for summer 1998 CE is a real fraud – they have no idea where the money is coming from and are even hoping for Lottery money!**

From Peasedown St. John, take the Wellow road. The cemetery will appear at your right. Continue and take obscure unsignposted first right as you enter the village. The longbarrow is on the hill directly in front and below you. Follow the road to signpost/car park beside the stream.

Stonehenge &



THE THREE POSTHOLES OF A MESOLITHIC UR-TEMPLE (C. 10,000 YEARS AGO) WHICH INSPIRED THE LATER CONSTRUCTION OF THE SACRED STONEHENGE LANDSCAPE ARE NOW FOUND UNDER YOUR CAR. WHEN THE CARPARK IS MOVED, WE WILL LEARN FAR MORE…

STONEHENGE

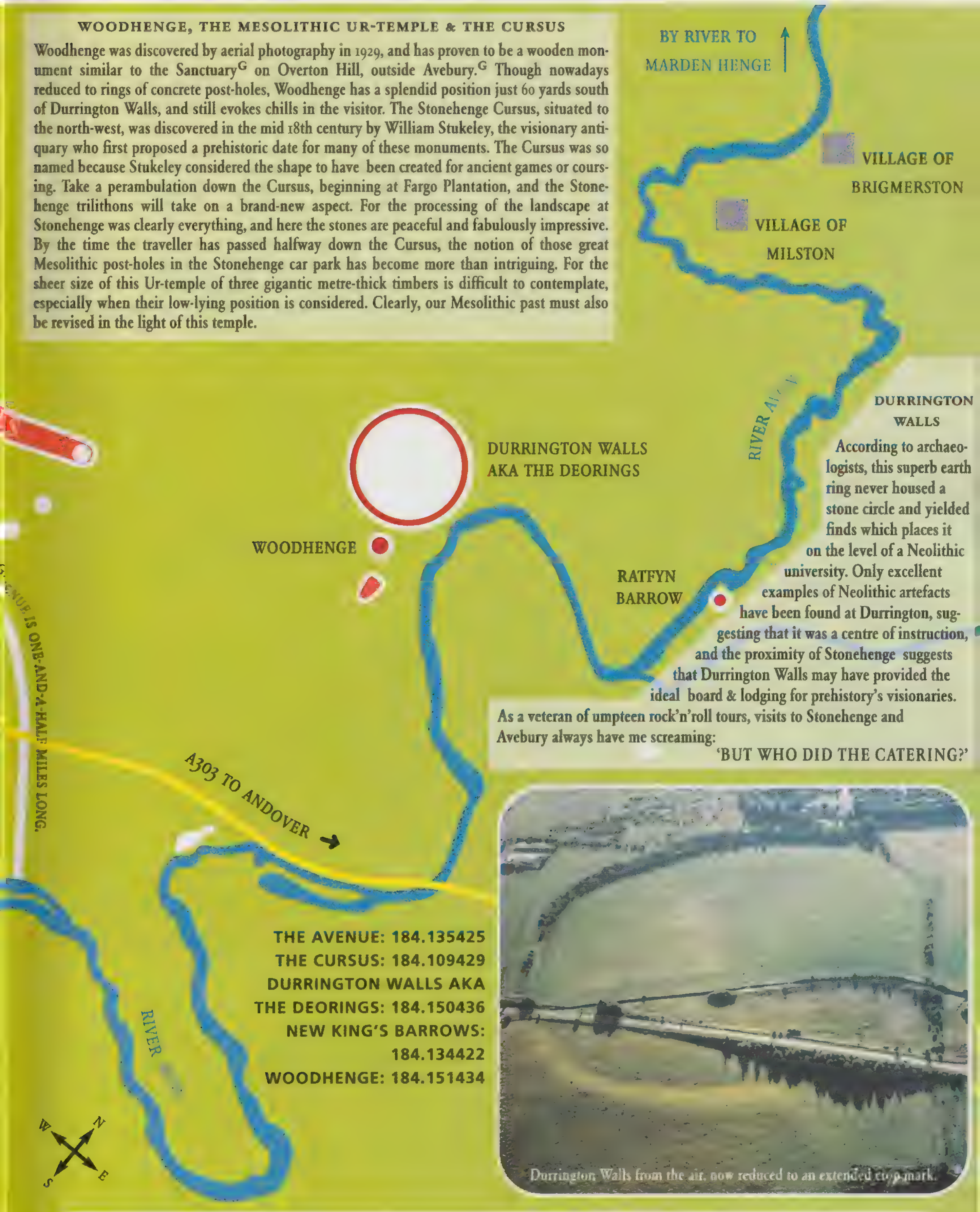
It is no wonder that archaeologists at the turn of last century fancied a visiting Mycenaean prince to have been the builder of Stonehenge. For the more British megalithic temples and templates that I see, the less of Stonehenge I recognize in these other ceremonial monuments. In the light of the rest of this book, Stonehenge appears, by comparison, to bear virtually no resemblance to the rest of these megalithic monuments. Aubrey Burl has emphasised that Stonehenge was built by later incomers who probably built no more than two or three other stone circles and had no real affinities with the original methods of the megalith builders. But even if this were the case, theirs is still an outrageous and magical drama imposed on the landscape. It is as though everything was invested in Stonehenge – 'Get this, we've harmonised the Heavens with the earth. What next?' Perhaps Stonehenge was so ultimate that everything which followed became a retrospective culture, a culture of Tradition. It seems generally accepted by archaeologists that Stonehenge was build by a visionary élite, for Geoffrey Wainwright's 1960s excavations at Durrington Walls uncovered only the best examples of Neolithic ceremonial artefacts, and the postholes and foundation holes discovered were laid out with incredible care.

its Environs

ORDNANCE SURVEY
184.123422

WOODHENGE, THE MESOLITHIC UR-TEMPLE & THE CURSUS

Woodhenge was discovered by aerial photography in 1929, and has proven to be a wooden monument similar to the Sanctuary[G] on Overton Hill, outside Avebury.[G] Though nowadays reduced to rings of concrete post-holes, Woodhenge has a splendid position just 60 yards south of Durrington Walls, and still evokes chills in the visitor. The Stonehenge Cursus, situated to the north-west, was discovered in the mid 18th century by William Stukeley, the visionary antiquary who first proposed a prehistoric date for many of these monuments. The Cursus was so named because Stukeley considered the shape to have been created for ancient games or coursing. Take a perambulation down the Cursus, beginning at Fargo Plantation, and the Stonehenge trilithons will take on a brand-new aspect. For the processing of the landscape at Stonehenge was clearly everything, and here the stones are peaceful and fabulously impressive. By the time the traveller has passed halfway down the Cursus, the notion of those great Mesolithic post-holes in the Stonehenge car park has become more than intriguing. For the sheer size of this Ur-temple of three gigantic metre-thick timbers is difficult to contemplate, especially when their low-lying position is considered. Clearly, our Mesolithic past must also be revised in the light of this temple.



DURRINGTON WALLS

According to archaeologists, this superb earth ring never housed a stone circle and yielded finds which places it on the level of a Neolithic university. Only excellent examples of Neolithic artefacts have been found at Durrington, suggesting that it was a centre of instruction, and the proximity of Stonehenge suggests that Durrington Walls may have provided the ideal board & lodging for prehistory's visionaries. As a veteran of umpteen rock'n'roll tours, visits to Stonehenge and Avebury always have me screaming:

'BUT WHO DID THE CATERING?'

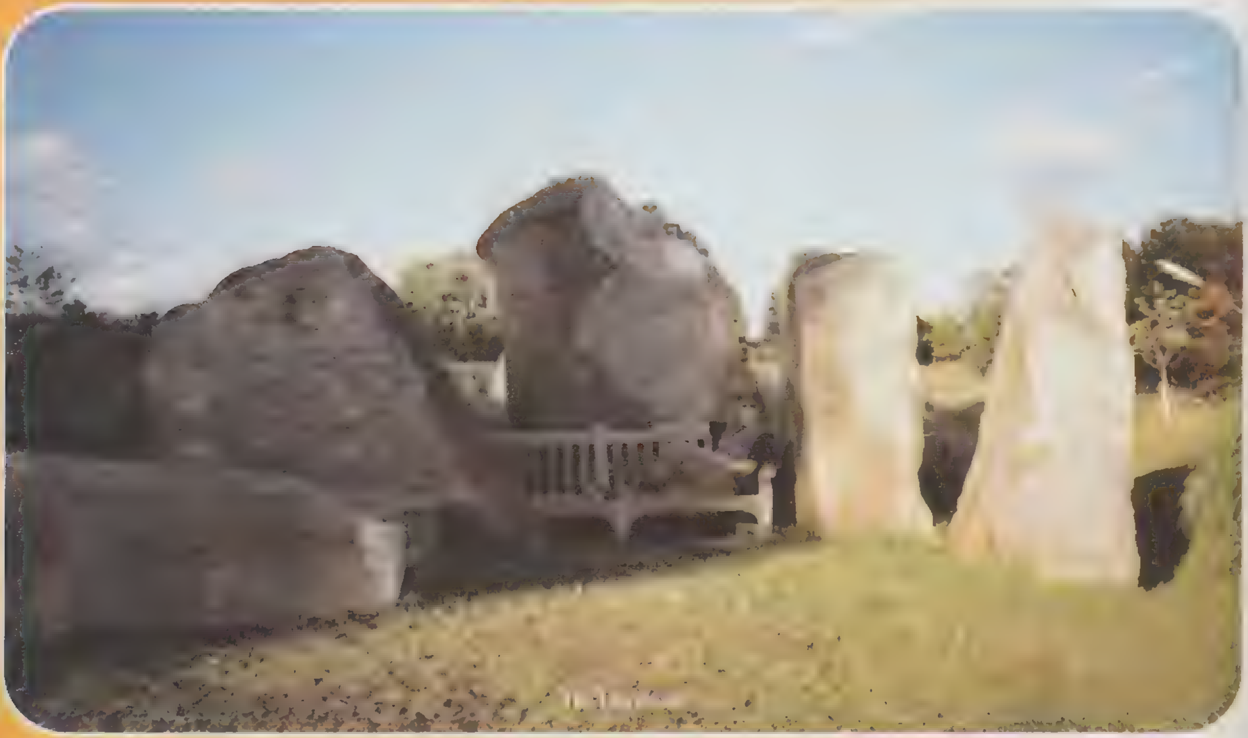
THE AVENUE: 184.135425
THE CURSUS: 184.109429
DURRINGTON WALLS AKA THE DEORINGS: 184.150436
NEW KING'S BARROWS: 184.134422
WOODHENGE: 184.151434

Durrington Walls from the air, now reduced to an extended crop-mark.

Stonehenge is reached along the A303 between Amesbury and Winterbourne Stoke. The barrow cemetery is at Winterbourne Stoke crossroads. Woodhenge is signposted on the A345 from Amebury to Durrington. Durrington Walls can be 'perceived' about 100 yards to the north of Woodhenge, using the aerial photograph.

The Circular Stones of Addington & the Chestnuts

The Addington longbarrow is actually cut through by a local road, causing the whole monument to slump in the landscape. On one side are vast strewn stones, probably original kerbstones like the enormous facsimile of a peristalith wall at Coldrum.[G] The mound now merges with the surrounding area so much that it appears that the roadbuilders cannibalised the barrow for materials to make the road that ruins it. In his *Munimenta Antiqua* of 1799, the Reverend Edward King wrote: 'Perhaps the Circular Stones that formerly stood in the parish of Addington, near Town Malling, in Kent, which are now almost obliterated, being partly buried under the sand, and partly by being broken, and removed.' Only 200 yards from Addington longbarrow, the Chestnuts longbarrow stands in the garden of a woman who is suing the Dept. of Transport, because the great cutting they made next to her house in which to drop the M20 is causing her house and garden to fall or rather slide down into the path of the motorway, the longbarrow also. The Chestnuts have an exceptional frontage and look like Wayland's Smithy[G] or the Grey Mare & her Colts.[G] The longbarrow was excavated by the archaeologist John Alexander in 1957. A rectangular chamber was discovered which contained the burnt bones of nine or more people. Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery was also found alongside leaf-shaped and barbed-and-tanged flint arrowheads. There had been a short longbarrow like the Grey Mare and her Colts.



NOTES FROM THE CHESTNUTS, ADDINGTON, KENT: 10TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

I'm kneeling opposite the bench at the standing stones, entranced by this ever-changing light. The Chestnuts stones stand and lie strewn around with purpose, like the forecourt of West Kennett[G] and Wayland's Smithy. In the near distance, the constant hiss of the M26 fills the air with autosibilance but it has gradually become an unnoticeable ambient backdrop in the past hour since I arrived. The megalithic frontage is truly huge and the enormous capstone lies casually discarded behind these fabulous giants, which appear to be a cross between sarsen and sandstone. Now, I shall make for the circular stones just up the road.

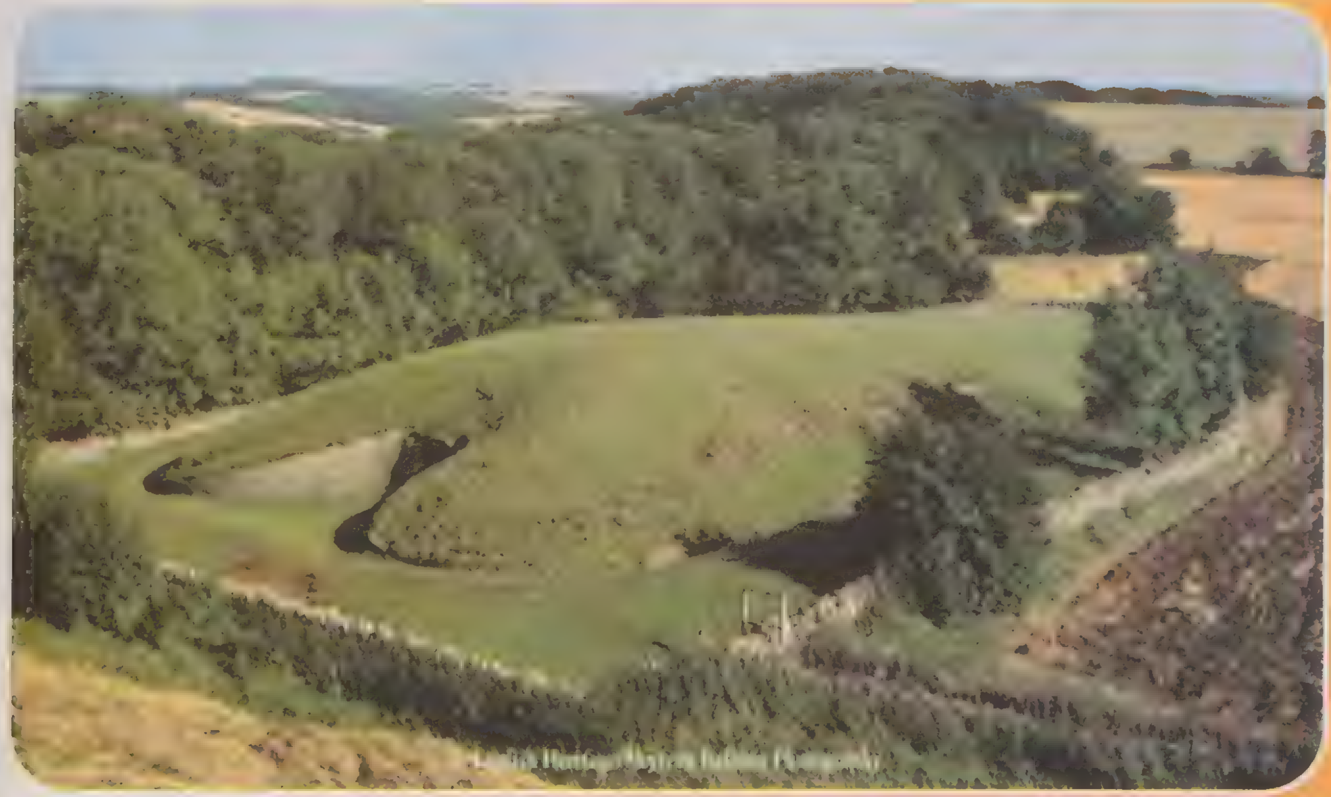
From Addington, take the back road to Wrotham Heath, parallel with the M20. After less than half a mile, your road will cross the Addington barrow and you will see a sign for the Neolithic tombs, on the right at Rose Alba. Park and ask.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
163.022254

2 c) 2

Belas Knap

Standing in the high Cotswold hills between Winchcombe and Cheltenham at an altitude of 980 feet, Belas Knap is a gloriously-placed longbarrow of the Severn–Cotswold type, that is, her ground plan represents the truncated form of the female figure. She is almost 200 feet long, orientated north–south, and a curved sixty feet wide at the broadest point. There are at the north end two horned corners to the barrow, creating a U-shaped forecourt of extraordinary drystone-walling, and a ground plan like the truncated form of a squatting woman. The vagina is represented by the huge megalithic doorway – a gigantic false entrance – a symbolic representative of the days when the more ancient people of Pentre Ifan^G and neighbouring monuments really did destroy and re-erect their forecourt entrances time and time again. The four polygonal burial chambers of Belas Knap are to be found down neatly-fronted passageways constructed into the long sides of the longbarrow. The mound is made of oolitic limestone rubble, supported all around by a fine revetted wall, now restored by the Ministry of Works. In excavations during 1863–65, and again in 1928–30, the remains of nearly forty people were discovered in Belas Knap. Also found in the chambers were parts of a boar's tusk pendant, hammer stones, some sickle blades and a flint saw. The longbarrow now stands between agricultural land to the south and west and the Humblebee Wood, which sweeps down from north to south on the eastern side of Belas Knap. All the finds are in the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum.

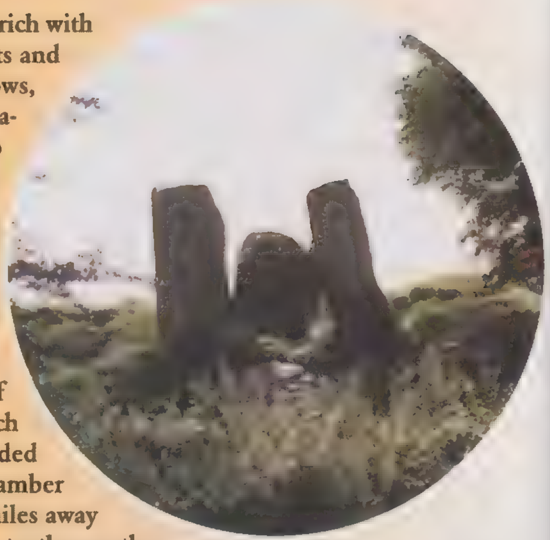


NOTES FROM BELAS KNAP IN THE COTSWOLDS: 28TH AUGUST 1991 CE, 5 P.M.

I'm lying in the evening summer sun, looking into the lowest, most mysterious burial chamber in the Belas Knap longbarrow. I climbed in earlier and the chamber goes back about ten feet, though the stone entrance portal is only around twenty inches high. Now, it is black and dungeonous – unlike the rest of this monument, which exudes a wonderful but confounding feeling… Though the climb is tough and takes between fifteen and thirty minutes (depending on age), the builders of Belas Knap did not take advantage of the extraordinary pot-ential of the skyline, as did the builders of West Kennett Longbarrow[G] and Adam's Grave.[G] Instead, they chose to make the barrow gentle and slumbering, more like the approach to Wayland's Smithy.[G] There is a mighty false entrance at the front of the monument, its lines are clean and the whole front looks like an ancient barge. Then the barrow's high forehead rises up thirteen feet and streams back, getting lower and lower until its sixty-yard length is only three feet high at the end. I became delighted with the place after around one-and-a-half hours of being here; its surrounding of a low Cotswold drystone wall, which initially put me off, adds considerably to the charm and makes the whole environs into a cathedral and gardens affair.

Belas Knap requires an O.S. map.

Coldrum



The great mound of Coldrum sits quietly in the Medway Valley in an area rich with very ancient Neolithic sites. Just one mile to the south stand the Chestnuts and the Circular Stones of Addington,G two of the oldest British longbarrows, whilst Little Kit's CotyG and the Countless Stones are situated five-and-a-half miles to the east. Coldrum stands at the edge of Ryarsh Wood, close to the ancient Pilgrim's Way, retaining its deep resounding mystery despite having been ransacked over the years. Its position on the edge of a natural terrace gives Coldrum a height advantage, and, from the back of the monument, the great kerbstones which encircle the mound are like a fallen stone circle. The monument's greatest associations have always been with the nearby village of Trotiscliffe (pronounced 'Trosley'), whose local church of St. Peter and St. Paul is supposedly connected by a tunnel to the great chamber within Coldrum. Leyliners have claimed an alignment of dubious provenance based on this old tunnel legend, but the Saxon church at Trotiscliffe has genuine prehistoric beginnings, with megaliths embedded into its foundations. One of the bodies discovered in the Coldrum chamber during the 19th century was reburied at Meopham churchyard over four miles away to the north, causing the vicar of Trotiscliffe to grumble that he had been robbed of his oldest parishioner. Unfortunately, it was the Trotiscliffe tunnel legend which caused the Coldrum chamber to collapse through over-enthusiastic digging. The scattered remains of twenty-two people were discovered in the chamber, one skull having been placed on a specially-made stone shelf. Walking around the flinty environs of this temple is mysterious even in bright sunlight, and in pouring rain and overcast skies the shadowy peace of Coldrum is overwhelming – the long view east across the Medway always splendid and uplifting. In his *Antiquities of Cornwall* 1754, William Borlase described the name Coldrum as a mutation of the Cornish word *Galdrum*, which means 'Place of Enchantments'.

NOTES FROM COLDRUM LONGBARROW, KENT: 4TH AUGUST 1991 CE

Where West KennettG and Wayland's SmithyG are awe-inspiring in themselves, Coldrum is heaped up high like some ancient Mexican pyramid tomb or temple. The entrance stones are massive and high up the mound – glowering down upon the onlooker, the sun vivid and supporting the aura of the place, like that David Bailey photograph of the Kray Twins, the menace of the foreground supported by equal menace in the background. The mound is in the side of a hill that slopes gently away behind and enormous recumbent megaliths act as a border for the burial mound. There is a huge magic about the place – its peace and its immaculate seclusion... Today the sun is high and the view breathtaking... The recumbence of so many of the stones belies the enormousness of both their size and antiquity. At the foot of the monument is a sign saying that it used to be considered an ancient stone circle – interesting, especially as the terrace of recumbent stones at the top remind me of Arbor Low.G As the young guy who just walked past remarked to his girlfriend: 'Yeah, I love it... It's about, what? Three million years old?' NB I'm always pissed off to have to pick up rubbish at these sites ... cigarette cartons, crisp packets, or even orange peel at Uffington White Horse.G People can be such planks!

Go to Trotiscliffe church, travelling from the village at the west. Continue past the church and make a ninety-degree left turn. In a few hundred yards, park on the right at the parking space and continue down the trackway to the longbarrow (about 600 yards, I think).

ORDNANCE SURVEY
163.928161

2 c) 4

Cold Slad on Crickley Hill

Following the prehistoric path down the north-westerly limestone scarp ridge of the Cotswolds, the multiple settlements, longbarrows and general antiquities hang in awe as they overlook the awesome Grandmotherness of the Severn Valley. From the north, travellers made their way in considerable awe past the settlement at Devil's Chimney to the causewayed enclosure of Cold Slad on Crickley Hill. The hill is most famous for its Iron Age defences, which are considerable, and the whole site is nowadays a country park. Because of the sizes of the defences, Cold Slad was only discovered through excavation. This is an unusual causewayed enclosure because it displays so many of the most important aspects of these Neolithic cultures, being ceremonial, domestic, commemorative and defensive all at the same time. Cold Slad began as a tiny oval barrow upon the hillside with quarry pits at each side. There was no burial in this temporary longbarrow, which was promptly plopped back into its ditches and smoothed over. Around 3000 BCE, the first ditches were dug in two large concentric circles and it appears that the settlement suffered attack from arrows. The settlement was temporarily abandoned then resettled with a new larger configuration of one deep bank and ditch. A shrine was set up away from the rest of the camp and was encircled by fences. This shrine was eventually covered over with a mound of rubble, a small encirling ring of low stones just under two feet high and a central burning slab. This last phase of the shrine was involved in ritual as late as Roman times. Around 2,000 years later, Crickley Hill became famous as one of the important Iron Age hillforts, so important that the Romans sent their military road the Ermin Way directly to Crickley Hill, aligned on the camp all the way from Corinium, the Roman provincial capital at Cirencester.

Cold Slad is most likely a mutation of 'Col Slad', which meant 'the earthwork on the hill'. There is another prehistoric earthwork also called the Slad at Wheathampstead on the river Lea at 166.184135, and a village simply called Slad, further south.

NOTES ON CRICKLEY HILL, GLOS.: 7TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

This extraordinary view across the Severn Valley is as holy today in its post-urban state as it was thousands of years ago. Despite the vile motorway junction to the west, the incredible beauty of the western horizon devours me as I look across to the dark ridgeback of the Malvern Hills twenty miles away. In the near distance, Robinswood Hill and Chisen Hill swell up, the former now dominated by a foul artificial ski-slope, whilst the Sugar Loaf and the Black Mountains are today visible forty miles away. It is claimed that the Wrekin is visible on an especially clear day, but that magical Shropshire outcrop eludes me in this windy, showery weather and I am more than content to see how little the M5 motorway affects this most special Mother valley.

Travel on the A417 from Gloucester towards Cirencester. As you climb out of the Severn Valley up the hill, ignore the sign for Cold Slad village. At top of the hill by the Air Balloon pub, turn left at the roundabout towards Leckhampton, then take the first left into Crickley Hill park.

Grimes Graves

Far from the heartland of British megalithic culture, Grimes Graves are by far the largest flint mines in these islands. Set deep in the modern conifer plantations of Breckland, these 346 deep mine shafts have been discovered dug over a huge thirty-four acre area, representing many years of prehistoric work. The miners chose to ignore the average higher flint flakes and go deep to the best possible sources around fifty feet below the ground. Down at the chosen layer, a series of radiating galleries up to thirty feet long were dug into the flint, creating a wheel effect in the ground. Miners carried antler picks with which to prise the flint nodules out of the ground and lit their way with chalk-cup lamps. As nodules filled a bag, so it would be hauled up to the surface and immediately shaped into the specific tool it already most resembled. All waste was used to fill up exhausted pits and the workers had extraordinary respect for their Mother Goddess. For it was here at Grimes Graves that archaeologists found a fertility shrine set up within a failed shaft, upon which was left a carved chalk Goddess figurine, a carved chalk phallus and chalk balls, along with a spread of antler picks. This devotion is somehow understandable in the powerful twilight of Grimes Graves, for this is a place of the Great Goddess and the many arching galleries represent months of work for the ancient miners. Mathematicians claim that twenty people could have run Grimes Graves, divided equally into those who quarried and those who knapped and shaped. Those people from areas without flint considered this essential cutting stone important enough to travel many miles for, and the need for flint carried on into the 20th century for use in pistols. Behind the Flint Knapper's Arms in the village of Brandon is a big pile of flints, for this dying art is still alive in the village. One shaft has been made open to the public – it has a concrete roof and is entered down a thirty-foot iron ladder. The chalk figurine is now in the British Museum.

NOTES IN TRUE GLOAMING AT GRIMES GRAVES, NR THETFORD: 14TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

Crouching in this hole so far below the ground, it is impossible not to wonder at the streams of consciousness that would have permeated the Ancients as they toiled below ground. Four hundred such pits were dug here and each was then carefully infilled before the next was begun. Seven 'chambers' are arranged around the circular shaft, each in varying stages of excavation. This gives the effect of one of the Orcadian cairns, such as Quoyness^{G} … or even the purposefulness of the Fairy Knowe^{G}… The Greenwell Pit, named for Canon Greenwell from the late 19th century, is not open to the public and is twenty feet deeper and equally more uncivilised. It is only possible to visit that pit with prior notice to English Heritage. It is such an important solitary experience that a visit to Grimes Graves should always be made out of season. Otherwise, 500 visitors per day will struggle past your meditating form. Now I shall leave, as the drips of water splash my neck and splatter my fieldnotes.

Top photo: © The British Museum

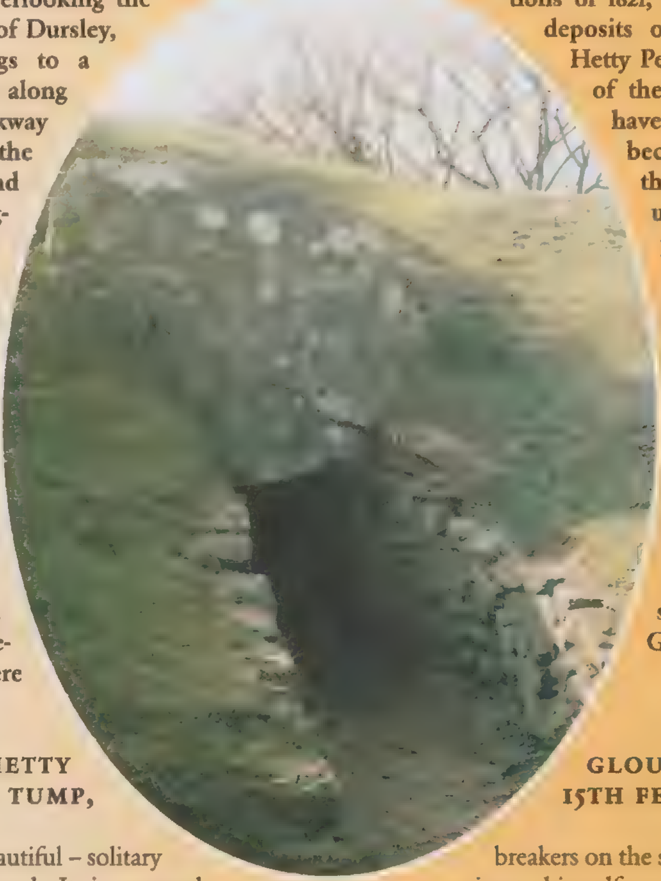
Drive south from Mundford on either the A1065 or the A134. Grimes Graves is clearly signposted from both roads, about the same distance along each. On most road atlases. Possible seasonal opening times – ring Thetford tourist information to be sure.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
162.789000

2 c) 6

Hetty Pegler's Tump

Standing in its fine verdant Gloucestershire farmland on a high ridge overlooking the Cotswold Way and the town of Dursley, Hetty Pegler's Tump belongs to a group of longbarrows situated along the former prehistoric trackway which has now become the B4066. This great round mound of Uley was not even recognised as a chambered barrow until 1821, when road-builders dug into it for road material. Unfortunately, this digging went on for some time, leaving two of the main chambers wretchedly destroyed and beyond restoration. Fortunately, the other two chambers are still in excellent states of repair – construction inside being both of drystone walling and megalithic walling. Bones enough for the skeletons of twenty-three people were discovered in the chambers during the excavations of 1821, and boar's tusks, pottery and deposits of charcoal were also found. Hetty Pegler was the 17th-century wife of the landowner and could never have known that her mound would become so famous, for it was, at that time, considered to be a natural mound. Visit the Uley Bury just one mile to the south at 162.785990. This finely situated Bronze Age camp overlooks incredible views to the west and the main entrance at the north corner was defended by a large mound and three deep ditches. Nymphsfield longbarrow stands one mile to the north of Hetty Pegler's Tump at 162.794013, whilst a few hundred yards further on stands the very-battered Soldier Grave longbarrow at 162.794015.



NOTES FROM HETTY PEGLER'S TUMP, GLOUCESTERSHIRE: 15TH FEBRUARY 1992 CE

This Neolithic barrow is very beautiful – solitary and visible from the main road. It is strangely shaped and, like Coldrum^{G} in Kent, has been dug into many times and in many places for treasure and the like. The Cotswolds are so very beautiful; the drive to this place is wonderful and dramatic and there is no disappointment on arrival. This is hunting country – in the distance, the hiss of foxhounds and the idiotic hunting horn calls to signify some pointless and imbecilic carnage over a near distant hill. Yet Hetty Pegler's Tump remains silent in this fabulous winter blue sky and the sweep of the wind across the fields crash like breakers on the shore. My dog Smelvin is whimpering to himself as people come and go… This barrow is well visited for such a wintery day. There is a low entrance to the chamber with rough low walls on either side, and a huge slap upright across the doorway… *From inside the chamber:* The chamber is about twenty feet long and there are two chambers to the left. I am sitting in semi-sludge in gloaming light, a slurry of leaves and mud having slid down into this long chamber. What a beautiful place this is. P.S. Dorian made for the Tump five minutes ago, at which time a freak hailstorm occurred, lasting two minutes only.

The Tump is clearly visible on the B4066 north of Uley. In most road atlases, sometimes called Uley Longbarrow.

2 c) 7

ORDNANCE SURVEY
164.378236

The Hoar Stone & Lyneham Longbarrow

The remains of the Hoar Stone, a once-great longbarrow, stand in the triangular Enstone Plantation which occupies the narrow quarter of the junction of the Enstone–Ditchley road off the B4022. Stones known as Hoar Stone, named for the Great Goddess Hoeur, are common in these parts. There is another far more ruined Hoar Stone longbarrow at 164.452242, four miles to the east, and a seven foot tall Hawk Stone at 164.339235 just one-and-a-half miles to the west. The Hoar Stone is most famous for its enormous central stone, known as the Old Soldier, which rises over nine hoary feet tall and dominates the entire site. Two other stones stand with the tall stone, evidently all once part of a now roofless U-shaped chamber. Three other stones lie recumbent, one of which may have been a capstone, but the mound of the monument is entirely gone. When the longbarrow was last drawn and engraved in 1824, the mound still rose over three feet high. It is unknown whether any stones have been removed from the site in the past two centuries, for there is a legend hereabouts which tells that 'all removed stones will return to the Hoarstone'.

NOTES FROM LYNEHAM LONGBARROW, OXON.: 9TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

In phenomenally beautiful October weather, I sit on the broken stones at the south of this heavily overgrown longbarrow. Nicholas Thomas has suggested that this was possibly a copy of the Breton Grand Tumuli found in the Carnac area. He certainly has a point, what with the large standing stone which still projects from the ground around sixty yards to my north. But the stone is a flat slab utterly at odds with the huge Carnac phalli and even the Chalcolithic mound of Crucuny, which appears to be an inferior copy of the originals, seems to have adhered to the narrow phallus image, unlike this great beast. Still, a grand tumulus in Oxfordshire is a very inspiring thought.

NOTES IN THE GLOAMING ON A FINE DAY AT THE HOAR STONE, OXON: 9TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

Sitting here in the tress hidden away from the busy crossroads which sprang up so long ago because of this great monument, it is hard to imagine quite how glorious it would have appeared in the Neolithic. Only the stones of Kempstone on the Isle of Purbeck^{G} are as hidden and unphotographable as this place, though the countryside all around is open and verdant. The Hoar Stone is huge, around ten feet high and around four feet by six feet in girth. Even the other remaining stones of the chamber are powerful, sturdy things, but the overwhelming sensation is of fertility within this always damp undergrowth. I shall return and photograph in the dark!

These sites both require an O.S. map.

Julieberries Grave

Julieberries Grave stands a quarter of a mile south-east of the junction of the A252 and the A28, in an overgrown clump of trees on the lower slopes of Julieberries Downs standing above the river Stour. The north end of this great earthen longbarrow has been been partly removed by quarrying, but the monument still survives to a width of around fifteen paces by a length close to forty-five paces. The barrow still stands to a height of over six feet in places, though the deep and unusual U-shaped single side-ditch long ago silted up. Julieberries was dug into by various 18th and 19th-century antiquaries, but was not excavated officially until 1936, at which time the barrow was shown to have been constructed of chalk over a turf core. The presence of this unlikely side-ditch was at that time first discovered and it was proven that the core of the barrow material was taken from this area, though no kerb or revetted wall had ever held the barrow sides into place. At the north-west end of the barrow was a ritual pit containing flint cores, flakes and scrapers, but the most important find of all was a thin-butted polished Neolithic flint axe. In his *Barrows in England and Wales*, Leslie Grinsell describes this important ceremonial axe as suggesting 'a possible link with Denmark or the Netherlands but this is no more than a guess'. The name Julieberries is a mutation of Julaber's, by which name the longbarrow was known to previous historians and antiquaries. It was once thought that Julaber had been a Roman commander and four Roman burials were discovered to support this theory, inserted into the south-east end of the barrow and dating from around fifty years after Jesus Christ. Gough's edition of *Camden's Britannica* thought the mound to have been 'the Sepulchre of a Roman Tribune, Quintus Laberius Durus', who had been killed by the ancient Britons. But antiquaries were ever suspicious of the possible great age of the barrow and Edward King, writing in his mighty *Munimenta Antiqua* in 1799, there stated: 'Julaber, instead of being a Roman, was either a giant, or a witch. We are left at liberty, therefore, to conclude this to have been a British barrow of high antiquity … half way between Swerdling Downs and Shellingfield.' Memories of the Great Goddess are seen in the name of the village known as Old Wives' Lees just to the north of Chilham. All excavation finds were deposited at Chilham Castle.

'A ruin is a sacred thing. Rooted for ages in the soil; assimilated to it; and become, as it were, a part of it.'
William Gilpin, 1786

NOTES FROM JULABER'S GRAVE, JULIEBERRIES DOWNS, KENT: 10TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

The sun is dancing across the longbarrow as I sit in the 360-degree peace of this late summer day… [but] the brightest of glorious days have been accompanied by fouls and avalanches of hysterical rain. But now, the sun and cirrus clouds provide an enthralling weather dance across the longbarrow, light phenomena cascading, dissolving, regrouping and treating the landscape as a canvas on which to daub and play. Julaber's Grave is now highly overgrown all along its north-eastern side, but the shaven north-western side rears up splendidly as an archetypal longbarrow and this place is perfect for hours and hours of picnics and hanging out.

Between Chilham and Bagham, the A20 meets the A28. Cross the railway line at this junction and pass through the trees to a car park at right. Continue on public footpath past huge white Kent Water house and cross the river Stour on the white metal bridge. Pass left on riverbank alongside redbrick house. Continue past house and uphill to your right. The huge overgrown barrow is visible behind the garden of the house, as the path opens out into a field.

2 c) 9

ORDNANCE SURVEY
174.328828

Lambourn Sevenbarrows

Seven as a mystical number appears to be confirmed on Sevenbarrows Down, for there are over thirty barrows in the formation at the bend in the road from Scary Hill to Croker's Hole. In his book *Barrows*, Leslie Grinsell claims thirty-five sites on these downs, though only around a dozen are still visible. The majority stand in two rows, these including two bell-barrows, two saucer barrows, two twin-barrows enclosed by a single ditch and many bowl barrows with encircling ditches. In the 1850s, the antiquary Edwin Martin Atkins excavated one of the barrows and discovered that incredible use had been made of the site. As well as a primary kist cremation and four secondary deposits, the south-western sector of the barrow contained 112 separate cremations contained in fifty-eight urns. The archaeologist Humphrey Case introduced a number system to the site in order to catalogue finds, but not everyone has adhered to this principle. A longbarrow stood at 174.323834 at the bottom of Wescott Wood at the foot of Crog Hill. A farm track passes over it and it is almost gone, but substantial finds show that before all that digging, a fine monument once rose here. The complete longbarrow was almost 300 feet in length and seventy feet wide at its widest point. Excavators discovered a core of sarsen stones and a kist-burial of rough construction. Perforated seashells found in the chambers may have been decoration. Finds are to be seen at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

NOTES AT LAMBOURN SEVENBARROWS, BERKSHIRE: 1ST OCTOBER 1997 CE

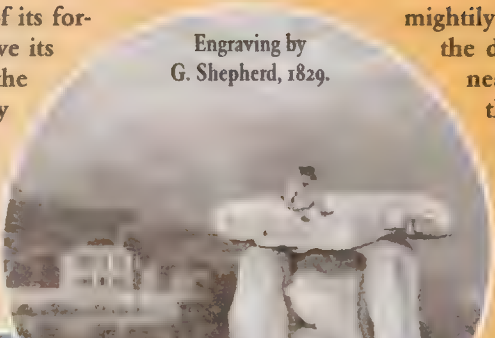
What a picnic place this is, miles from anywhere in the heart of racehorse country. The Sevenbarrows are a beautifully impressive cemetery – twelve countable in the landscape, reinforcing the idea that the seven in the name is a mystical number. The monuments themselves remain impressive in carefully preserved unploughed land with over 100 recorded species of plant, including four kinds of orchid, cowslip, thyme, clustered bell flower and horseshoe vetch. Butterflies are found in abundance around the barrows, which stand in the 266 hectares of this undisturbed and flower-rich habitat which once represented the whole of this area. The two remaining saucer barrows are very Argyllshire, and at the north end of the cemetery stand two roundbarrows fully enclosed by one deep oval ditch. This is a marvellous place.

Travel north out of Lambourn on the B4001. After about two miles, take the big left and continue until the road becomes serpentine. The sevenbarrows are here and signposted.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
188.(KIT'S)745608/(COUNTLESS)745604

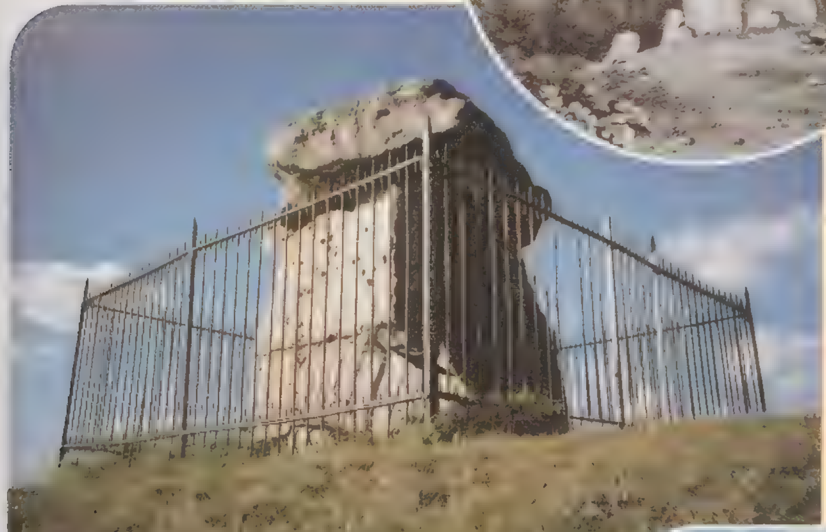
2 c) 10

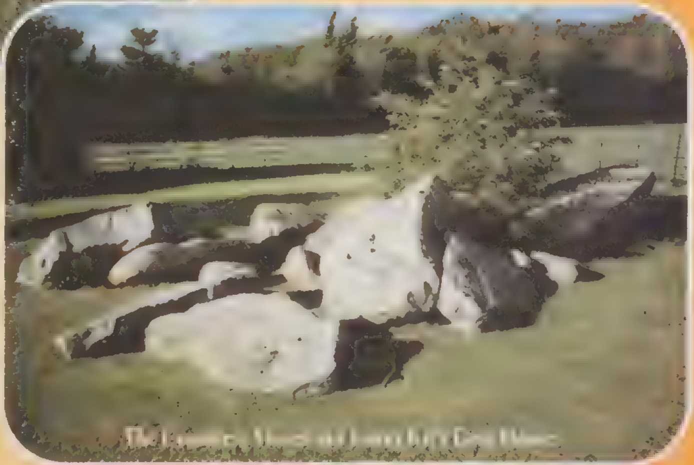
Little Kit's Coty



Engraving by G. Shepherd, 1829.

This mighty dolmen stands at the end of its former 180 foot long mound, towering above its deadly iron railings. Kit's Coty is one of the largest dolmens of all, as the 17th-century diarist Samuel Pepys wrote: '...three great stones standing upright and a great round one lying on them, of great bigness, although not so big as those on Salisbury Plain. But certainly it is a thing of great antiquity, and I am mightily glad to see it.' Legend has it that the dolmen was built by witches from nearby Bluebell Hill to the north, but then legend has a lot of things at Kit's Coty. If you place an object on the capstone at full moon, then walk around it three times, the object will disappear. They say that Kit is short for Catigern, a Dark Ages king who lost his fight against Horsa in 455 CE and was subsequently buried here. People claim to have seen ghostly re-enactments of the battle at the site. The visionary Paul Devereux has taken photographs of strange light phenomena issuing from the capstone and my wife felt a wild and sustained vibrating when she visited the site in 1994 CE. When William Stukeley drew Kit's Coty in the early 1700s, its sister monument Lower Kit's Coty House, around 600 yards to the south, was known as the Countless Stones. Now they lie wrecked under trees, confused, unmagical and easily countable, whilst the stones on the hill are poised, alert and thrilling us still.





The Countless Stones at Lower Kit's Coty House

NOTES AT LAST! FROM LITTLE KIT'S COTY, MEDWAY VALLEY, KENT: MONDAY 24TH JANUARY 1994 CE

Kit's Coty is a magical place. Surrounded on all sides by roads (even a new and LOUDER one since last we were here), gunfire from some distant loon, and industry threatening, still this legendary cromlech gives off a startling vibration. Even railed in by these black spiketops, the magic of Kit's Coty is in your face. Some obliging soul has sledgehammered an entranceway into the monument so now I sit in the Kent mist and slight drizzle on the meaningless jumble of stones below the incredible capstone. The mound is almost gone. I would not have recognised it without the most vague dent in the field behind and the fact that the tomb was oriented east–west. Like the entrance to Tinkinswood[G] and Trethevy Quoit,[G] Kit's Coty is entered through a bizarre crooked stone which was crawled through in order to get to the now destroyed and removed chamber. But most curious is the fact that this stone looks far better from the west side where, in Neolithic times, it would have been within the chamber and so hard to regard. This stone seen from the west looks very anthropomorphic... It has an extremely stubborn and natural feeling around it. Last time we were here, April 1990, I found two wonderful pieces of wood. Each one later became a prize possession and I made them into wands.

Drive to Aylesford from Ditton, passing under the M20. At Aylesford, cross the tiny riverbridge, bear right and take the first left turn. Continue along this road until it bears right – make the bizarre left ninety-degree turn and park on the tiny hard shoulder. The dolmen is across the weird dual carriageway, uphill through the trees on an open hillside. From your parked car, the Countless Stones are 200 yards behind you across the road you just travelled.

2 c) 11

ORDNANCE SURVEY
199.543035

The Long Man of Wilmington

On the steep sides of Windover Hill in Sussex stands the Long Man of Wilmington, a huge chalk figure, overlooked by the longbarrows of Hunter's Burgh and the Windover Long Mound. Despite the large number of figures cut into the sides of British hills, the Long Man of Wilmington and the Cerne Abbas Giant^G are the only two human depictions to have been discovered, with the exception of T. C. Lethbridge's motley gang at Wandlebury in Cambridgeshire, and the giant Goemagot, who was lost from his ancient place on Plymouth Hoe in the past two centuries. The Long Man is a peaceful character, faceless and stoic, as though standing at the great gates of some future life. He is thin and unsexed, yet has his home within a great combe of extreme beauty, with these great barrows on the summit of the hill – a large bowl barrow, a platform barrow, even flint mines scatter the hilltop. And there are eight longbarrows within six or seven miles of this Long Man of Wilmington.

Photographer: Jane Stevenson.

The Long Man's stance [illegible] showing a soldier holding [illegible] 7th-century examp[illegible] glesham, Kent. This [illegible] a spear in each [illegible] between the Uffington horse^G [illegible] to have been more than [illegible] Age. The astronomer John North considers that the Long Man was Neolithic and began as a cursus, merely utilising the two parallel white chalk lines. He suggests that the twenty-eight degree incline of the hill was so similar to that of Silbury's thirty degrees that, even without the figure of the Long Man, the parallel lines would have done the required job. North suggests that [illegible] Reverend W. de Sainte Croix decided to elim[illegible] problems of seven-year scourings in order to clean the figure. Instead, he restored it with yellow bricks cemented together. Until another T. C. Lethbridge appears on the archaeological scene, it is impossible to know whether the current Long Man of Wilmington is as complete as was intended by his builders.

NOTES FROM THE CAUSEWAY ABOVE THE LONG MAN OF WILMINGTON, SUSSEX: 30TH JANUARY 1992 CE

The sun low above our heads in pure blue skies on this cold day above the Long Man. We climbed forty-five minutes up the manger beyond … the chalk figure and came upon longbarrows, mounds and thee most curious earthworks I have seen for a long time. The Long Man was obliterated in the Avalon mist surrounding this valley but high atop this chalk and flint earthwork encrusts the top … with the marks of New Stone Age Man. A light breeze chases my ears into a hat but I am delighted as I hurry back to Dorian and Albany way down in the carpark below. Now I shall go and leave this place, but we must return and soon. A veritable city of ancient earthworks. A rare treat. My teeth, my gums, my freezing fingers – I am alive.

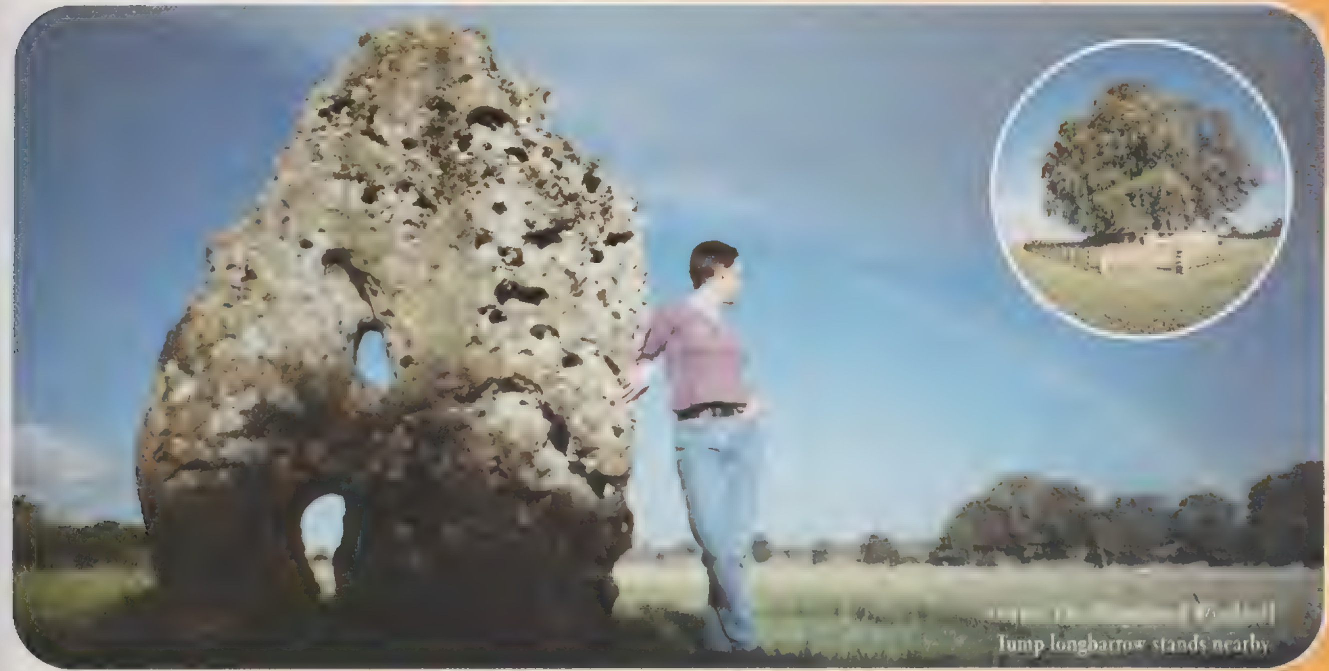
Travel west on the A27 from Polegate. At Wilmington, turn left towards Milton Street, Lullington and Litlington. The Long Man is signposted and is shown on most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
162:885999

2 c) 12

The Longstone of Minchinhampton

This most famous stone in Gloucestershire stands in the corner of a quiet pasture at Hampton Fields south of Minchinhampton in an area of dense antiquities. The longbarrows of Gatcombe Lodge and the Tinglestone all stand within one mile to the south, that at Avening was reconstructed in a nearby garden, whilst the Devil's Churchyard almost a mile to the east is now reduced to a circular depression in the field where once was a fine stone circle. But the isolated oolite Longstone of Minchinhampton stands almost eight feet tall in its peaceful field, subject of legends and stories and, being a 'holey' stone, capable of healing too. Rags and charms were passed through the stone to 'ignite' their magic in the past, and those with ailments and sicknesses passed the sick part of their anatomy through the hole in the stone. Mothers have even been known to pass their babies through the hole! Legend has it that when the village churchbell strikes twelve midnight the stone will run around its field. It is also known to drink at the spring in Minchinhampton. An Earth Mysteries writer called Alan Lovejoy had a strange experience at the Longstone in 1988, when he took a geomagnetometer there for a practical dowsing meeting with the British Society of Dowsers. The Longstone appeared to temporarily give off a great discharge of magnetic energies which then promptly stopped. Someone suggested encircling and re-charging the stone by laying their hands on it, after which the 'chargers' all complained of 'headaches and fatigue and we ended the experiment'. There is another small stone about three feet tall built into a field wall twelve paces from the Longstone. This stone caused the antiquary Samuel Rudder, in his 1779 *History of Gloucestershire*, to conjecture that a longbarrow had once stood here, but this is highly unlikely as there would have been too many unfortunate collisions with the Longstone as it tore around the field each night.



[illegible]
Tump longbarrow stands nearby

NOTES AT THE LONGSTONE OF MINCHINHAMPTON, GLOS.: 7TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

What a spectacular visit! The sun bowed out behind an enormous bank of thunderclouds as I arrived and Tara, an Irish goddess reborn, told me that I had just missed a rainbow by one minute. We talked of Ireland and the Hill of Tara, at which point the sun and rainbow returned! Then Theophilus Gimbel, a white-haired writer on complementary medicine, arrived and explained that newborn babies were indeed passed through the lower stone and he had seen it done in the past twenty-seven years. This stone is also known as the Tingle Stone after its ability to create vibrations around people.

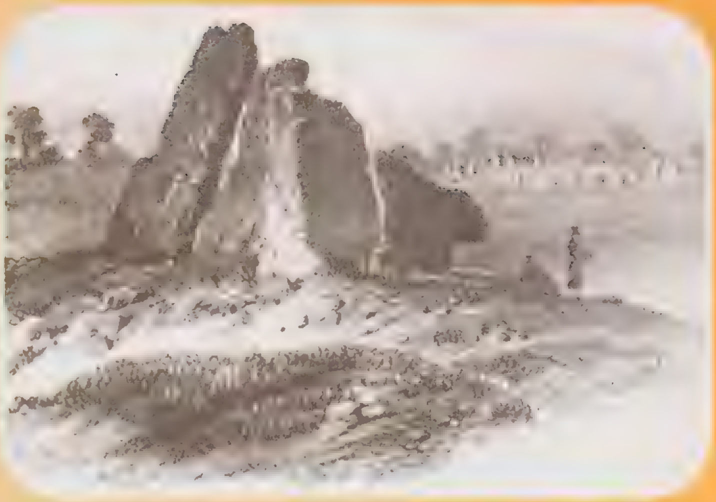
From the high plateau of Minchinhampton Common take the south-westernmost road out of the village. The stone is on the left, clearly visible in a field (Minchinhampton is a maze of roads – use patience or an O.S. map). Like Windmill Tump, it is obscure, but marked on many road atlases.

The Rollright Stones

From the point of view of the modern traveller, the Rollright Stones are probably the most important single monument in this book. For, here on the ancient Cotswold ridgeway known as the Jurassic Way, in the heart of Middle England, and with no other stone circle as their neighbour, the Rollright Stones have come to play a vital lifeline role in the lives of Pagans and occultists down the ages. Strange goings-on have always been reported at Rollright, and even nowadays, beskirted clerics still cluck about Devil worship at the circle, as though that car in nearby Coventry Cathedral was something less.

'Corroded like Motheaten wood by the harsh jaws of time,' wrote William Stukeley of the ancient Rollright Stones, and never more poetically was this great monument defined. For the hoary chunks of leprous limestone which combine to form the great stone circle known as the King's Men have weathered and fallen over the years. Some have been dug up and repositioned by treasure-seekers and quack doctors in search of 'medicinal' bones, whilst the stones' sheer fame and legend have contributed to their erosion by tourists. At the King's Men, the various pieces of stone, upright or recumbent, are rarely over four feet tall. But they are nowadays judged as uncountable by locals because they have been moved, re-erected and reinterpreted so many times. In 1695, *Camden's Brittannica* referred to 'that curious Antiquary Ralph Sheldon Esq. making a diligent search in the middle, after anything that might lead us to the first design of it, and ... found himself disappointed'. Some time before 1886, many of the more manageable pieces of stone were being removed for building material. At that time, and in an effort to save the stones, the rest of the fallen pieces of eroded stone were erected between the original uprights, creating today's miracle of confusion. Indeed, the circle is now almost a contiguous kerb of uprights in places, like Lough Gur in Ireland.

There was once a natural hill altar called the Archdruid's barrow, nowadays so reduced by ploughing as to be unnoticeable, but this may have been the original inspiration for the siting of the stones. One legend has it that the stones were once a local king and his army, who had supposedly been approached by a witch. She addressed the king thusly: 'Seven long strides shalt thou take. If Long Compton thou canst see, King of England thou shalt be.' The king rose to the challenge: 'Stick, stock, stone, as King of England I shall be known.' But on taking his seven strides, the king's view was impeded by the Archdruid's barrow, and the witch cried: 'As Long Compton thou canst not see, King of England thou shalt not be. Rise up, stick, and stand still, stone, for King of England thou shalt be none. Thou and thy men hoar stones shall be, and I myself an eldern tree.' And so the whole army was turned into stone, becoming known as the King's Men. The king became a great outlier known as the King Stone, and is nowadays situated on the opposite side of the Jurassic Way/main road, surrounded by a dangerous-looking iron fence. Around 400 yards the east stand the Whispering Knights, a great capstone-less dolmen, which appears to have been ruined in antiquity. In the 1950s, Lesley Grinsell suggested that this was the remains of a Cove similar to those at Avebury,[G] Stanton Drew[G] and Arbor Low.[G] But new evidence of a former round mound makes this unlikely. The legend of the



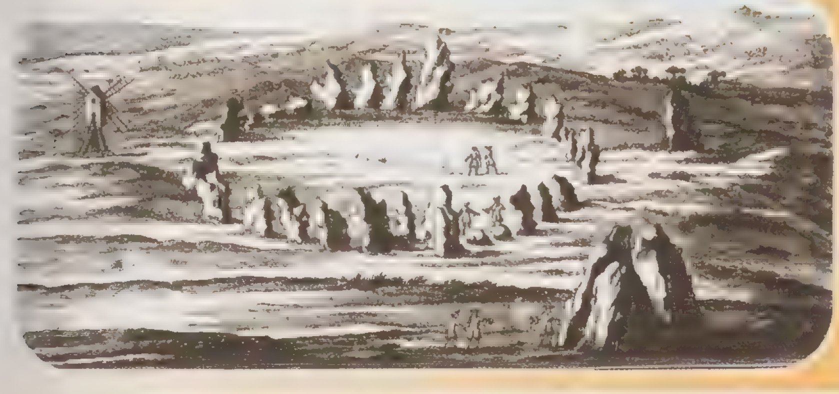
king and his army claimed the Whispering Knights to have been the petrified remains of the king's dissatisfied cavalry. Today, they too stand huddled behind some enormous metal fence, but their proximity to the main circle allows the mind to wander and imagine all kinds of ancient ceremonial pathways.

The Rollrights are still considered to have fertility properties, and the antiquary William Stukeley reported that at various important times of year, young people still gathered amongt the stones for the taking of cakes and ale. In *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*, Aubrey Burl has written: 'If a young wife were infertile she would visit the circle at midnight and press the tips of her breasts against the stone just as women did at Carnac 300 miles away across the English channel.'

It is their singular quality and proximity to civilisation which has ensured that the Rollrights retained a contemporary context in the minds of locals. Aubrey Burl has commented on how 'the open circle of the Rollright Stones ... lingered in use for two thousand years, the earliest ceremonies never entirely forgotten even when they had declined into the mummeries of witchcraft'. Stories of witches' sabbats were told throughout Tudor times, whilst Warwickshire witches were said to go skyclad, or naked, to the stones. The goings on around Jurassic Way have contributed to its modern reputation as Spook Road, and Paul Devereux's Dragon Project spent many years at the stones attempting to discover if there were any repeatable and measurable phenomena. Devereux's book *Places of Power* provides a wonderful insight into the workings of modern pseudo-sciences, but the Rollrights seem like an untrue place for such experiments. Like Avebury, Castlerigg,ᴳ Callanishᴳ and Stonehenge,ᴳ the Rollrights are awash with the overlay and dreams of countless modern generations. Surely any sensitive may sense something. But would it necessarily be ancient or modern? My friend sensitive Alex Peach once camped in a field near the King Stone, only to be woken at 2 a.m. by blinding headlights and the roar of agricultural machinery. It was the local farmer and his sons having a drunken tractor race. What energies did Alex contribute to the stones as he ran screaming into the night? It must surely be difficult to measure ancient subtle energies when such modern technological/human paranoic energies are bouncing around. At the Rollright Stones, time is still such a challenge, and hours can be spent there unwittingly. Visitors should not be in a hurry here.

NOTES FROM THE ROLLRIGHT STONES: 31ST JULY 1991 CE

Dorian and I sit back to back at these here Rollrights… Children are working out the number of stones, the chatter incessant and fascinated as the breeze sways the trees, the copse encircling and protecting like the copse at Wayland's Smithyᴳ…The children are reading out [loud] from the pamphlet on the stones. None of them can agree on the right number: one has 77, the other 89. In the distance across the cornfield stand the Whispering Knights. They are surrounded by that fencing which so detracts from Little Kit's Coty,ᴳ but this area is peaceful, wonderful and the most magical of stone circles. *From the King's Stone*: Sitting atop the hill on this balmy day, the King's Stone is trapped behind a heavy iron fence – unfortunately necessary since there was long a tradition to chip off a piece for good luck if you ever passed along the road. It's 6.05 p.m. now and the whole area is bright bright sunshine. *From the Whispering Knights*: It's 7 p.m. and the sun is hanging low in the sky. I'm sitting in the newly mown hay with the huge megaliths in front of me… Hmm, last time I came here, I was not touched by these slumbering giants because of their iron railings. But *this* time, it's the iron railings which add a sadness, yet they do not truly spoil this place. For here, in a farmer's field, is a sight and a site that makes this as unlike any farmer's field as I ever knew. Across the field about 600 yards away in their copse stand the King's Men, out of sight but making this a very special ancient Bronze Age complex.



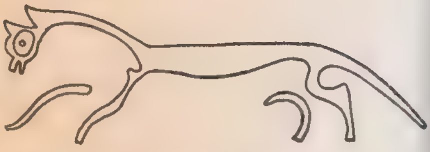
THE KING STONE: 151.296308
THE KING'S MEN: 151.295309
THE WHISPERING KNIGHTS: 151.299308

Travel south of Long Compton on the A3400. Take the second right turn and the Rollright Stones are about a mile down this road.

2 c) 14

ORDNANCE SURVEY
174. SEE BELOW

The Uffington White Horse



From an engraving by the antiquary Plenderleath, 1885.

The Uffington White Horse is the loveliest of all the great British hill-figures. Its ancient fame has brought many thousands of pilgrims to view it down the millennia, and the Vale of White Horse is a mythical place to many. But, in the late 20th century, no prehistoric monument more exemplifies the shifts in expert opinion than does the Uffington White Horse. When I began this book seven years ago, in May 1991 CE, the 120 yard long White Horse was tentatively dated at around 100 BCE. This was a recent dating and many unconvinced scientists still considered that the horse may have had Dark Age ancestry, as it had been famously recut to celebrate Alfred the Great's victory over the Danes. This had caused many historians to misunderstand and think that the horse had only originated in the 800s. But since 1996 CE, the White Horse has been redated to around 1400 BCE, making it a product of the early Bronze Age. The horse's strange shape has driven many to speculate as to its origins, some even questioning the beak-like snoot as a horse at all. The horse stands high upon White Horse Hill, between the Ridgeway and the high drop into the Vale of White Horse. Directly beneath the chalk figure is a concave scoop of earth – a gigantic sweep of vale called the Manger. This natural crescent amphitheatre overlooks a free-standing natural cone-shaped hill called Dragon Hill, a truncated turfed eminence and the legendary place where St. George killed the Dragon. The chalky bald patch on the summit is the place where the Dragon's blood fell. So vile and poisonous was it that no grass has ever grown there since. In his tome *Stonehenge: Neolithic Man & the Cosmos*, the astronomer John North writes: 'No matter which way we read the symbol, we have here yet another prehistoric fertility symbol.'

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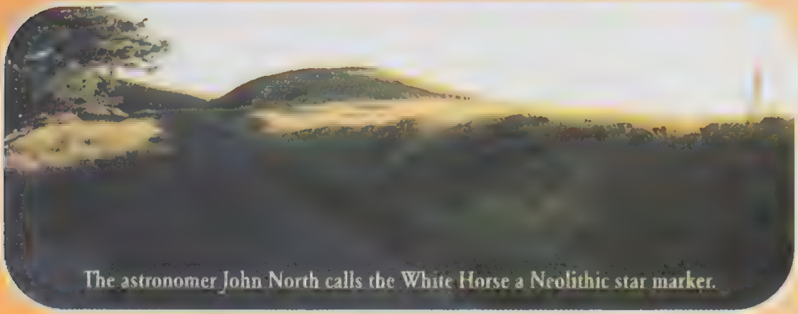


The astronomer John North calls the White Horse a Neolithic star marker.

Though the White Horse has been, down the centuries, almost lost several times in the undergrowth, the tradition of scouring the horse once every seven years has been utilised successfully for periods, most people visiting the scouring for the carnival and fair within the enclosures of Uffington Castle, one of the most finely placed camps in all of Britain.

NOTES FROM UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE, BERKSHIRE: 1ST JUNE 1991 CE

I write with very cold hands, the White Horse twenty to thirty yards below me to my right … and the sun breaks through suddenly and warms my aching soul. Long shadows across the man-made fortifications below – long shadows and a Blakean arc of rays cuts the cold and draws me into its eternal glow. Up here and with no perspective, the White Horse is meaningless – its eye staring unblinking, a foot or so carved into the hill, yet here it may have stood forever. Earthworks abound and I cannot help but scan the horizon… The shadows lengthen and more peace… White chalk routes cut these hills and stalk out this endless greenery. Greenery. Ha, ha! A delirious man awake and awash in a sea of green.

THE UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE: 174.302866
DRAGON HILL: 174.301869
UFFINGTON CASTLE: 174.299863

Dragon Hill and the White Horse are both clearly visible on the B4507, between Woolstone and Kingstone Lisle.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
166.062247(WAULUD)/007210(KNOLLS)

2 c) 15

Waulud's Bank & the Five Knolls

Five Knolls.

The area of chalk and flint around Luton is the magical beginning of the Chiltern Hills, an anciently settled area full of marvellous sacred hills marked with ancient earthworks and tumuli. Unfortunately, the past fifty postwar years have seen an unprecedented amount of building turn the area into yet another part of the great conurbation, but happily, the landmarks of the past still rise up out of this superimposed and temporary pre-fabrication.

The great D-shaped chalk enclosure of Waulud's Bank was built at the rising of the river Lea. Unfortunately, this river also inspired the rising of the town of Luton (said with a Welsh eye 'Leeton'), which has in the past fifty years spread northwards to encircle this Neolithic enclosure, standing as a last refuge as a park in a major town. But this was once a very important site and requires a visit, for there are no such enclosures like Waulud's Bank left anywhere in Britain. There are silted-up ditches still almost twenty feet wide on the outside of the enclosure, but once they stretched over thirty feet across and were great flat-bottomed constructions, like the astronomical longbarrow chambers of the Wiltshire longbarrows. Inside great banks of earth still stand eight feet high in places, forming the softened north, south and east sides of the monument. The river actually rises from three tributaries in the Sundon road recreation park, but the main source has now been confined in a concrete tunnel with bars across its entrance. Postholes of a Neolithic hut were also found here for this must have been a convenient place to live in the Neolithic period. Excavations have never taken place in the centre of the sacred area, but grooved ware of that period has been found here, along with scores of flint arrowheads. The people of Waulud's Bank kept cattle as well as hunting and fishing in the marshes to the west of the river Lea. The archaeologist Timothy Darvill has suggested that Waulud's Bank was built as a 'ceremonial focus' connected with the source of the river Lea, whilst James Dyer compares the site to the great Marden henge in Wiltshire at 173.091583. This is because both sites originated as great settlements but were also focuses for ritual and later became used as henges. All finds are in Luton Museum.

The Neolithic barrow cemetery of the Five Knolls is placed high at the north end of beautiful Dunstable Downs. One mile to the west near the village of Tottenhoe stands the Neolithic enclosure of Maiden's Bower, whilst the southern escarpment points to the wondrous summit of Ivinghoe Beacon about five miles away.

WAULUD BANK
DRIVE

NOTES AT WAULUD'S BANK, LUGH'S FARM (LUTON): 4TH SEPTEMBER 1997 CE

Waulud's Bank stands in the middle of such recent domestic and industrial activity that it is tragic to wonder what might have been just fifty years ago. McWaulud's would be a more fitting modern name, as the the trail of garbage from that fast-food joint with the M-name across the road leads right over Waulud's Bank towards the high-rise flats just 400 yards to the north. Down at the source of the river Lea, it is still a magical marshland of lush vegetation and three miniature confluences which must have been the place of ancient ritual deposits… Walking around the site reveals its huge proportions and shows the bank and ditch to be far more traceable than first appears.

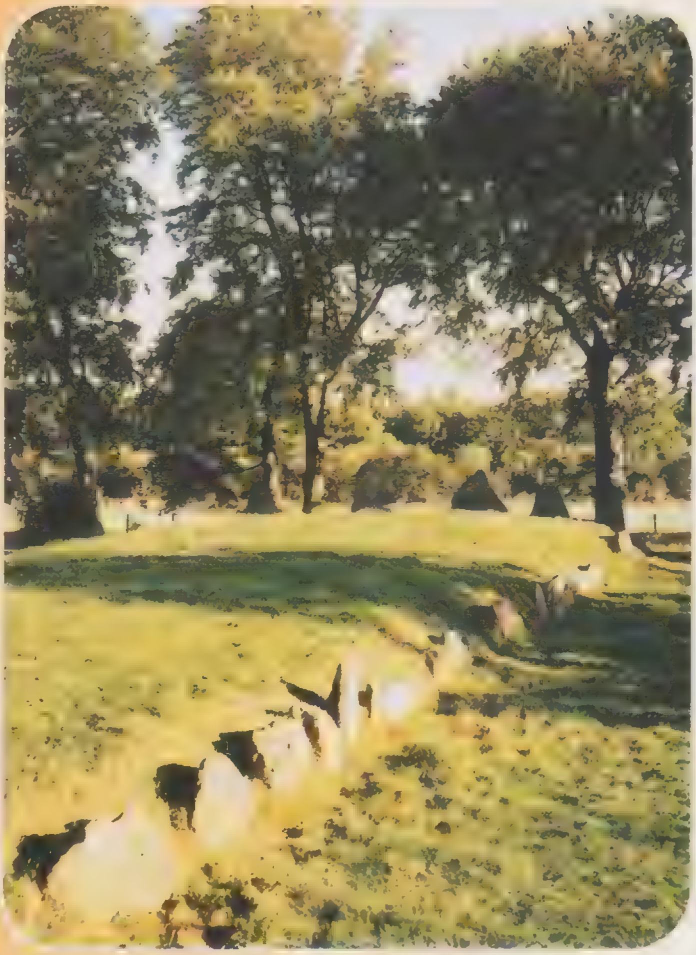
1. Luton is confusing. Look up Waulud's Bank Drive in a street map, or take all day guessing. 2. On the A5 through Dunstable, turn left for Tring on the B489. In less than a mile, turn left on to the B4541 and park immediately. Five Knolls Down is the grassy slope in the V-shape between these two roads. Start climbing.

2 c) 16

ORDNANCE SURVEY
174.281854

Wayland's Smithy

There is no more perfectly placed longbarrow in all of Britain than Wayland's Smithy. For it stands in a wooded copse 100 yards off the Ridgeway, overlooked by White Horse Hill, its summit decorated with Uffington Castle's earthwork, a mile and a half to the east. Wayland was a legendary blacksmith who lived at the smithy. If you brought your horse to be shod overnight and left coins on the stones, he would have it done by morning. Excavations in 1919 discovered the skeletons of eight adults and one child in the two main chambers, but no grave goods were found and all the thigh bones had been removed. New excavations in the longbarrow during 1962–3 revealed that directly beneath this chambered longbarrow had previously stood an oval mound with surrounding ditches. Within this mound had been a wooden mortuary house built on to a stone floor. Fourteen bodies had been recovered in the mortuary house, which was encased in chalk and sarsen stone. This monument was partly destroyed during the building of the present long mound, which is a huge structure almost 200 feet long with a fabulous megalithic façade and two low-slung chambers. Compared with the massive long mound at West Kennett,[G] the Wayland's Smithy mound is a pert, feminine thing only fifty feet wide at its deepest section and trailing away to only one foot in height at the far end of the barrow. Only four of the original six stones remain as Wayland's Smithy's frontispiece, but it is still an awe-inspiring structure.



RIGHT: Looking along the peristalith wall to the forecourt.

WAYLAND'S SMITHY NOTES ON A FRIDAY AFTERNOON: 24TH SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

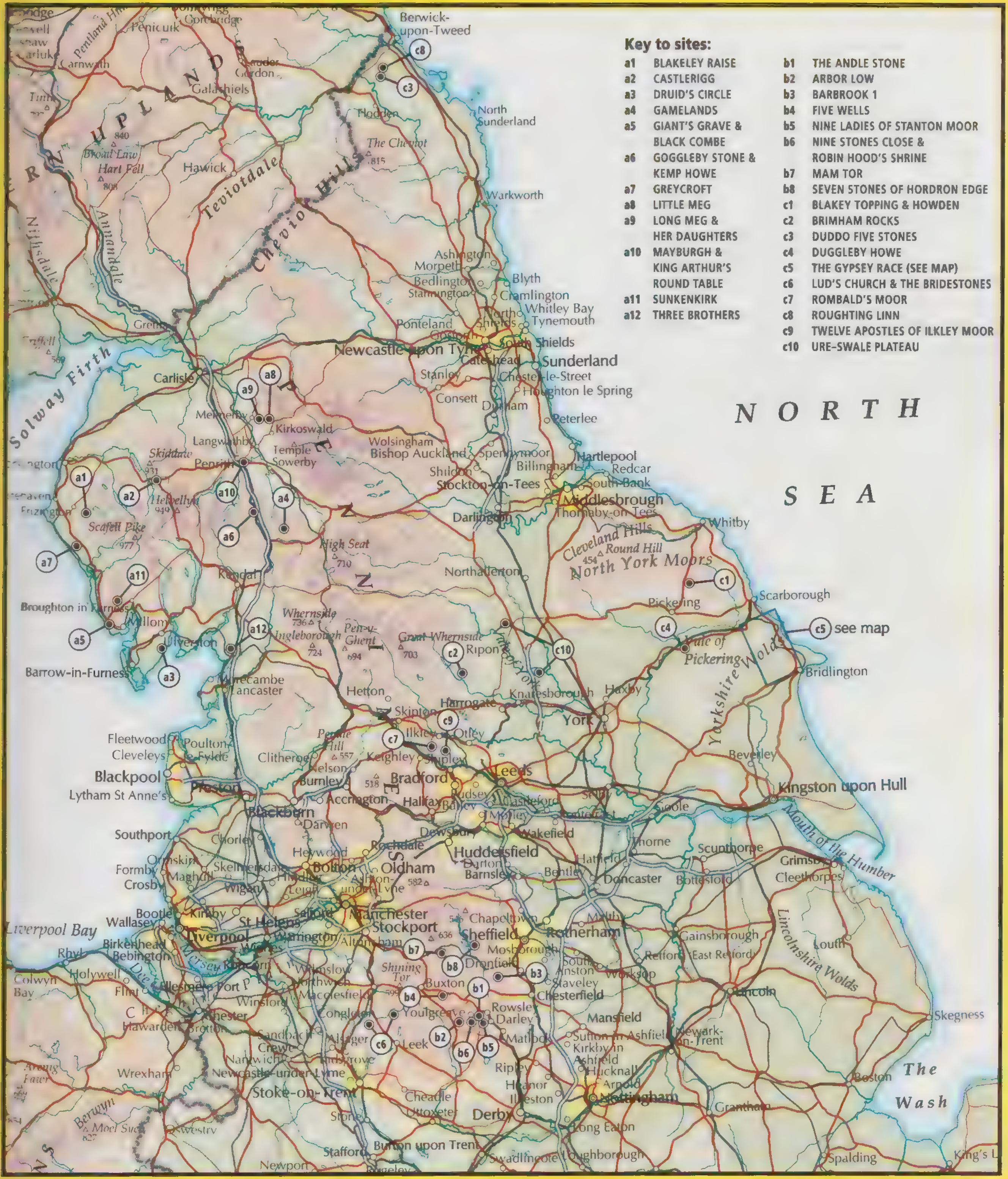
The megalithic forecourt in shade.

Dorian tells me it's over a year since we last were at Wayland's Smithy. I can hardly believe it but we are back and that's the main thing. The sun is a misty ball ahead of me low over the mound, Albany is happy hard-bouncing in my lap as I write. Earlier, we went up to Uffington Castle and I showed Leli [my mother-in-law] the Dragon Hill, explaining the whole story. That area is supernatural in its land sculpture. Now, I'm rejoicing at our return to Wayland's Smithy. First time after ... the great Boyne trip...

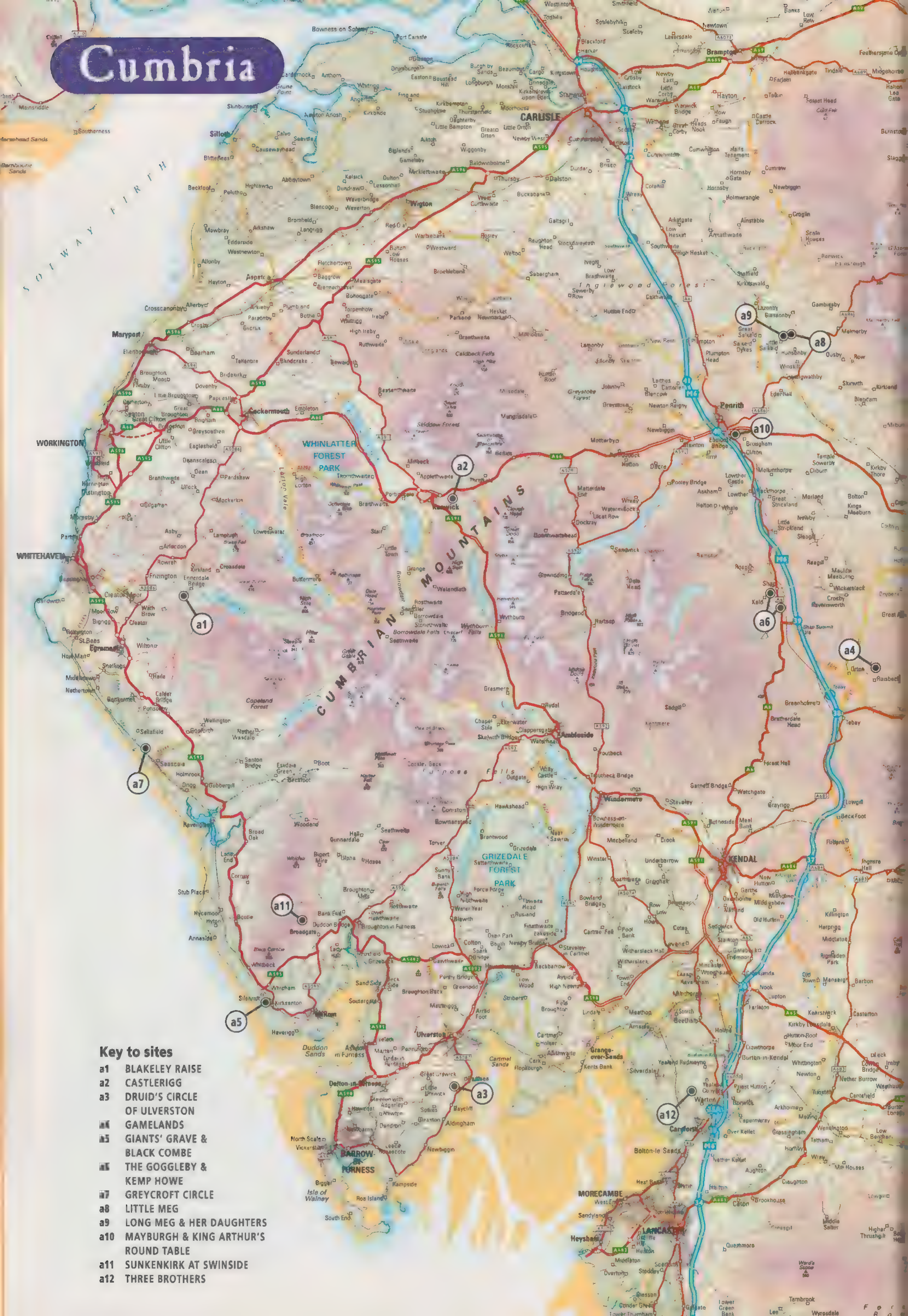
Travel on the B4507 from Compton Beauchamp towards Kingston Lisle. At the left turn for Woolstone, turn right uphill and continue until you cross the Ridgeway. Walk to your right at the Ridgeway. Wayland's Smithy is in a copse about 600 yards along the track to your right.

three

Northern England


Key to sites:
a1 BLAKELEY RAISE
a2 CASTLERIGG
a3 DRUID'S CIRCLE
a4 GAMELANDS
a5 GIANT'S GRAVE & BLACK COMBE
a6 GOGGLEBY STONE & KEMP HOWE
a7 GREYCROFT
a8 LITTLE MEG
a9 LONG MEG & HER DAUGHTERS
a10 MAYBURGH & KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE
a11 SUNKENKIRK
a12 THREE BROTHERS
b1 THE ANDLE STONE
b2 ARBOR LOW
b3 BARBROOK 1
b4 FIVE WELLS
b5 NINE LADIES OF STANTON MOOR
b6 NINE STONES CLOSE & ROBIN HOOD'S SHRINE
b7 MAM TOR
b8 SEVEN STONES OF HORDRON EDGE
c1 BLAKEY TOPPING & HOWDEN
c2 BRIMHAM ROCKS
c3 DUDDO FIVE STONES
c4 DUGGLEBY HOWE
c5 THE GYPSEY RACE (SEE MAP)
c6 LUD'S CHURCH & THE BRIDESTONES
c7 ROMBALD'S MOOR
c8 ROUGHTING LINN
c9 TWELVE APOSTLES OF ILKLEY MOOR
c10 URE-SWALE PLATEAU
c5 see map
NORTH SEA
Solway Firth
Cheviot Hills
Teviotdale
North York Moors
Cleveland Hills
Vale of Pickering
Yorkshire Wolds
Mouth of the Humber
Lincolnshire Wolds
The Wash
Liverpool Bay
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Newcastle upon Tyne
Sunderland
Carlisle
Middlesbrough
Scarborough
Bridlington
York
Leeds
Bradford
Kingston upon Hull
Blackpool
Preston
Manchester
Liverpool
Sheffield
Stoke-on-Trent
Derby
Nottingham
Lincoln

Cumbria



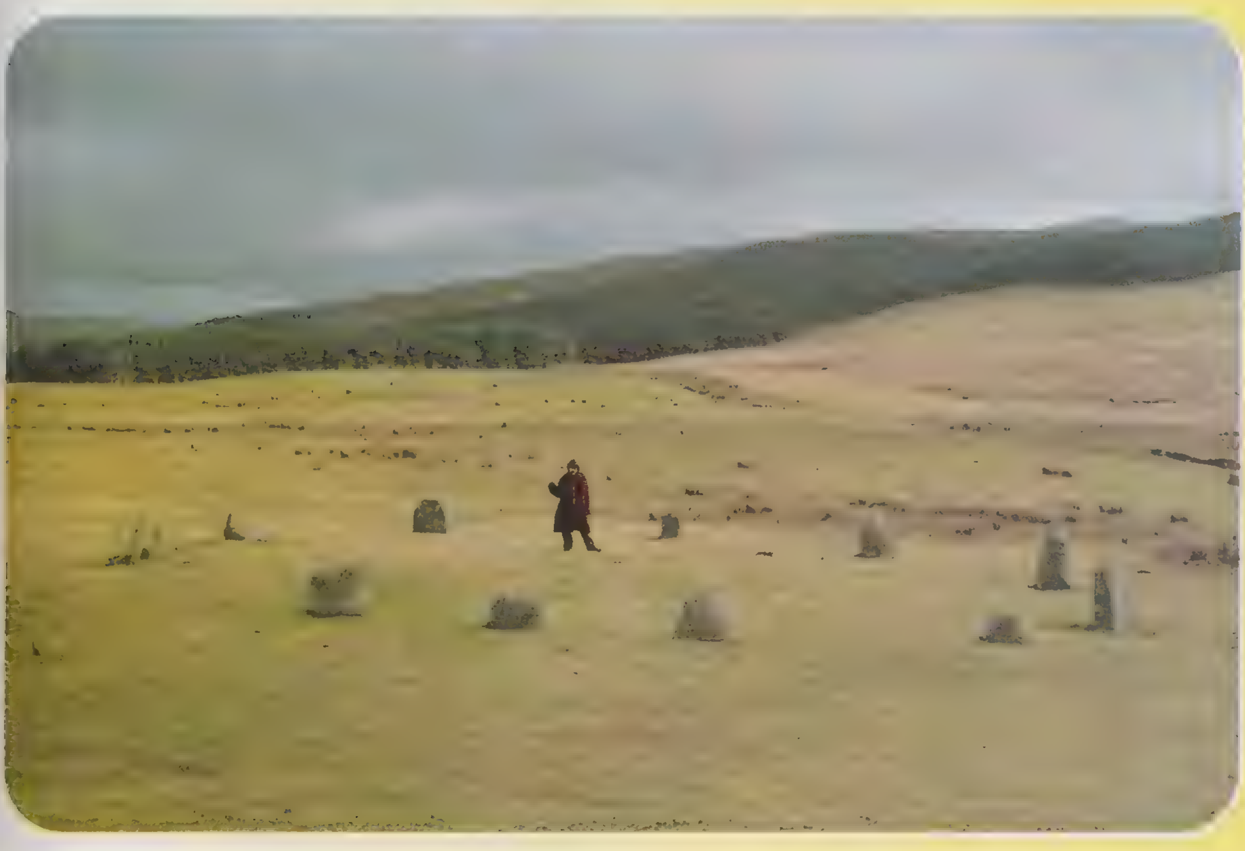
S O L W A Y F I R T H
CARLISLE
Silloth
Wigton
Maryport
WORKINGTON
Cockermouth
WHITEHAVEN
Egremont
Keswick
Penrith
Brampton
I n g l e w o o d F o r e s t
WHINLATTER FOREST PARK
C U M B R I A N M O U N T A I N S
Skiddaw Forest
Borrowdale Fells
Copeland Forest
Ambleside
Windermere
Coniston
GRIZEDALE FOREST PARK
KENDAL
Ulverston
Millom
Dalton-in-Furness
BARROW-IN-FURNESS
Isle of Walney
Duddon Sands
Cartmel Sands
Grange-over-Sands
Carnforth
MORECAMBE
Heysham
LANCASTER
Shap
Orton
Tebay
Kirkby Lonsdale
Sedbergh
M6
a1
a2
a3
a4
a5
a6
a7
a8
a9
a10
a11
a12

Key to sites

- a1 BLAKELEY RAISE
- a2 CASTLERIGG
- a3 DRUID'S CIRCLE OF ULVERSTON
- a4 GAMELANDS
- a5 GIANTS' GRAVE & BLACK COMBE
- a6 THE GOGGLEBY & KEMP HOWE
- a7 GREYCROFT CIRCLE
- a8 LITTLE MEG
- a9 LONG MEG & HER DAUGHTERS
- a10 MAYBURGH & KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE
- a11 SUNKENKIRK AT SWINSIDE
- a12 THREE BROTHERS

Blakeley Raise

The perfect stones of Blakeley Raise stand on a flat patch of common overlooking Low Cock How, on the far western edge of the Cumbrian mountains. With wild views to the mountain of Lank Rigg to the south-east, the whole of the south and eastern view is heavy with mountain ranges, but the northern horizon is so open and stupendous that Alexander Thom claimed an alignment from this stone circle to a position in Dumfries and Galloway. This doubtful claim emphasises the sheer distance of this magical northern horizon. The eleven small but substantial stones of Blakeley Raise were re-erected by a Dr Quine in 1925, though the excavator himself claimed only a 'partial restoration'. This suggests that most of the stones were found in their original positions, and, luckily, the isolation of this stone circle has guaranteed its at least partial survival.



NOTES AT BLAKELEY RAISE STONE CIRCLE, NEAR CLEATOR MOOR, CUMBRIA: 1ST APRIL 1993 CE

This small stone circle is delightful ... high up away from towns and villages yet right next to the tiny moor road, surrounded on all sides by glorious views. Lank Rigg is a large featureless mountain to the east, and the views to the south-west dip down to the sea about six or seven miles away. The accuracy of the reconstruction has been questioned, but as so many of the important Cumbrian circles are in tatters, I do feel that the occasional reconstruction is very important. Its visual impact makes this a glorious place to sit and take in the quest that ancient Man was involved in. Alexander Thom found stone no. 5 to be pointing through the centre of the circle to Screed Hill, barely visible to the north and a part of Dumfries and Galloway. His claim that this showed the maximum northerly point of the setting moon during its 18.61-year cycle seems massively over-confident. Today, it's very clear yet Screed Hill is barely visible. Also, the circle formerly had a cairn of unknown size in its centre. Surely a distant sighting point, such as a boulder on one of the far north hills nearest to the site, would have provided greater accuracy ... it's possible that Thom was deluding himself. That said, this is a glorious place and astronomically must hold a whole feast of possibilities from its level plateau here on Blakely Moss.

At the road junction south-west of Ennerdale Bridge, take the road south and climb up onto the mountainside. Continue for under three miles. Blakeley Raise is on a flattened area beside the road on your left and clearly visible.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
89.292237

Castlerigg

The perfect amphitheatre in which Castlerigg stone circle stands is created by the Cumbrian mountains of Skiddaw and Lonscale Fell at the north, Blencathra to the north-east, the mighty Clough Head to the east and the valley of St. John's Beck, down which all attention is initially diverted. To the west, the mountains of the Derwent Fells battle for Castlerigg's attention. These stones are also known as the Carles, an archaic form of description for a wise elder. They are thirty-five in number and not by any means huge, preferring to rely on the scenery around as a background to their natural beauty. In 1856, Mr B. Williams reported the discovery of three cairns within the circle, but no traces now exist. A large unpolished stone axe was found here, followed by another similar discovery nine years later. The right-angular setting was excavated in 1882 by Kinsey Dover, who found a three feet deep pit filled with charcoal, earth and some pieces of stone, said to be unlike any other interment yet discovered. The antiquary William Stukeley reported the remains of another stone circle in the immediate vicinity in the early 1700s.

These four views of Castlerigg, all taken within five minutes of each other, reveal four almost entirely different monuments.

NOTES FROM CASTLERIGG: 11 A.M., 31ST MARCH 1993 CE

Alone at Castlerigg … a very unusual stage of affairs. The sky is all blue with two patches of tiny wispy cloud over to the NW but all around me the hills sing in communion with the sky and the mighty Carles. Sit inward-looking and silent. The scenery of this spot is beyond all. The other day, I pushed Albany in her pushchair up the steep road from Keswick, an ascent of one mile in heavy wind. At the summit and in extremely dense cloud, Dorian, Leli, Albany and I all huddled together and saw a roof at the top of the earth. Some locals say weather like today's is too perfect and unrepresentational. I disagree. Here is a circle of around 4,500 years in age. It has lived through many periods of weather and early Bronze Age people would have been unable to visit such a spot unless the weather was at least halfway decent. And if the Bronze Age was a Golden Age, as scientists have suggested, then Castlerigg would have often been seen like this – in perfect sunshine and with fat pregnant sheep grazing in the pasture. Today, I am alone and Castlerigg is a little too unreal to take in.

Castlerigg is signposted out of Keswick town centre to the west, between the A66 and the A591. On most O.S. maps.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
97.293739

3 a) 3

The Druid's Circle of Ulverston

Standing on Birkrigg Common, with long low views across Morecambe Bay, the Druid's Circle is a small monument, largely battered and its outer ring destroyed. The construction of the Druid's Circle is surprising, for it is made of the local and very pretty carboniferous limestone, which is found scattered in huge clumps all around Birkrigg Common. This gives a greatly reduced impact on walking to the circle, as similar and much larger stones are passed along the way. Yet, during the excavations of 1911 and 1921, it was discovered that a pavement within the inner ring had been constructed of 'blue-rag', a stone which would have taken a considerable time to find. This makes the circle all the more mystical in its builders' psychic desire to fit the temple quietly into the landscape yet hold a fundamentally exoticness unknowable to all but the builders. This correlates with Alexander Thom's notion that nothing of the extraordinary planning and perception which went into the ground plans could have been generally revealed or understood. Under the blue-rag pavement was found 'a small collared urn, its deep collar neatly-impressed with a Lattice pattern of whipped cord', as Aubrey Burl reveals. The urn is now in Carlisle Musuem.

This photograph was taken by [illegible]

RAVING AT THE DRUID'S CIRCLE, NOTES FROM BIRKRIGG COMMON, ULVERSTON, CUMBRIA: 31ST MARCH 1993 CE

A mighty hang-out this. The Druid's Circle is a funny place – not so much a sacred site as the local party attraction. The outer stones are all fallen down, trashed and scattered. But the smaller centre stones are tough in their embankment and look as though they've weathered all kinds of depredations… This circle overlooks Morecambe Bay, the white sands drifting out for miles and the sea never more than wade-deep… There's evidence of local charms here, too: cut flowers… As Dorian says, some teenager probably celebrating a wonderful (or dreadful) moment in their life. But, much ruined or not, the Druid's Circle is full of life and has a charm all its own.

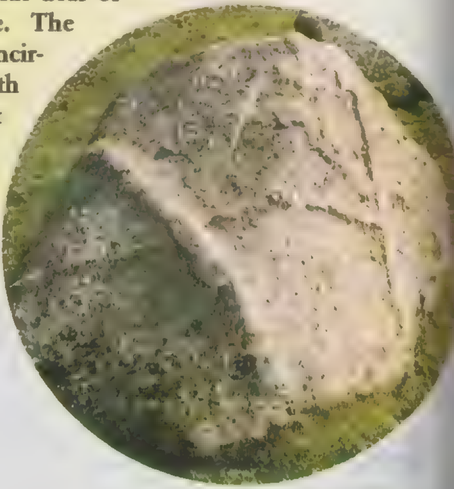
The Druid's Circle requires an O.S. map.

3 a) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
91.640082

Gamelands Stone Circle

The tragic toppling and blasting of these circle stones, in 1862, has not obliterated Gamelands' importance as a major Cumbrian site. These coarse red granite boulders slump rather than sit at the foot of Knott Hill, a large magic hill rising 600 yards north of the stone circle, and part of a massive mountain behind called Great Asby Scar. Aubrey Burl has noted one circle stone to have been 'a single limestone boulder'. Gamelands sits in a wide open valley, which is the floodplain of the river Lune. Knott Hill is unlike the rest of the many hills on this floodplain, standing out as the ideal one. Near to the circle, at the foot of Knott Hill, begins the spring of Rais Beck. Two other courses of the flow begin a little to the east, all clustered under Knott Hill, which has cairns on its summit and an O.S. trigonometry pyramid as well. Gamelands was originally a forty-two stone circle, but the southern drystone wall has accounted for a great deal of the missing stone. The stones were once encircled by a low earth bank. This is best seen at late evening from the side of Knott Hill.



NOTES FROM GAMELANDS STONE CIRCLE, CUMBRIA: 30TH MARCH 1993 CE

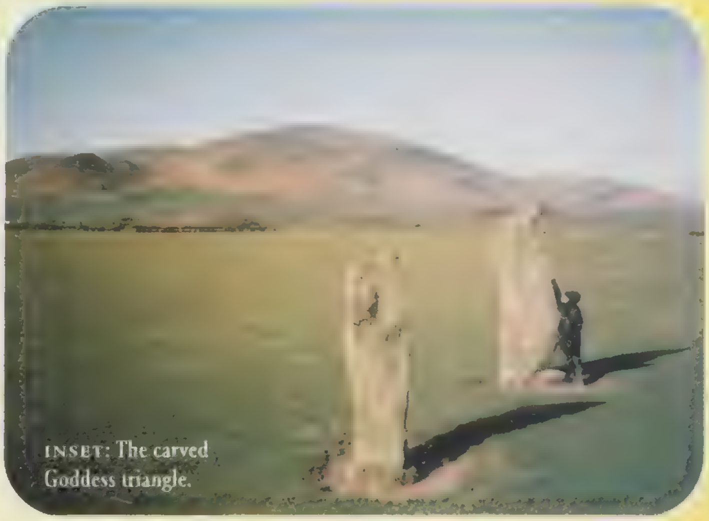
This beautiful open stone circle is out there with the best. Built in the shadow of Gt. Asby Scar, like Fernacre^G and Rough Tor,^{G} like Swinside Fell and Sunkenkirk,^{G} Gamelands' relationships are entirely with the mountains which stamp their mark so extraordinarily on to this scene. I expected less – the stones having been pulled down to facilitate ploughing last century – but not a bit of it. Gamelands is like Long Meg^G in its pastureland, slung low ... and ... no longer needing to impress. There is nothing quite so beautifully and simply majestic as a large open stone circle.

NOTES ON KNOTT HILL OVERLOOKING GAMELANDS – THE GODS' EYE VIEW: 2ND APRIL 1993 CE

High on Knott Hill! The Mother hills range all around us and here I sit in a tranquil bliss of greens. The huge circle, now enclosed by drystone walls, sits low below me, its disturbed past now hopefully over. To look down at a great stone circle is to see the place as the Ancients wished their gods to view it. Like sitting on Rough Tor's Logan stone and watching Fernacre, this moment is one of high privilege. As Colin Wilson wrote: 'A temple is a place of union between cosmic and terrestrial forces.' Forty-five hundred years ago, a peaceful union was in this valley.

At Orton, on the B6261, strike west out of the village for about a mile. Gamelands is on a deserted trackway on your left, after a road to a farm. Knott Hill will be in front of you. Gamelands is behind the wall to the right about 200 yards.

Giant's Grave & Black Combe



INSET: The carved Goddess triangle.

Black Combe, on the Duddon Sands, is a natural massif of mountain size, looking for all the world like a pregnant Mother on her back. She has a face, arms at her side and a huge belly, round and full. To her south on a north–south alignment is the natural sun hill called Baldmire, a smaller child-of-a-hill standing at the centre of boggy ground. Six hundred yards further south are the tall magnificent standing stones called the Giant's Grave. Both stones are carved with large deep cup-marks, one on the westernmost stone, and a downward-pointing triangle of three on the easternmost stone, probably signifying the pubis of the Goddess. As a megalithic observatory, the Giant's Grave should probably be excavated for evidence of a platform or paving stones. The ground around the stones appears to be extremely compacted, though perhaps from centuries of dancing feet. Checking out local records, I soon discovered that several stone circles had once ringed the low foothills of Black Combe during the Neolithic, but tragically all are now destroyed. Nevertheless, the former glory of this sacred centre has been retained in various local references, particularly in the name of Kirkbank farm, situated in the southern lea of the head of Black Combe. Kirk means 'church', which could equally well apply here to a megalithic monument, suggesting an ancient memory of some early temple still celebrated in the farm's name.

At the northern head of Black Combe formerly stood the Kirkstones, a huge double circle which survived until the end of the 19th century, and was described by G. Ecclestone in 1874 thus: 'On the Green Moor Farm are 30 stones called Kirkstones, forming part of 2 circles, similar in position to those of Stonehenge.' South of Kir stones stood a now-removed cairn with a twenty-five yard diameter, whilst just to the north was Annaside stone circle, now wholly obliterated save one huge boulder of coarse crystalline granite. The archaeologist John Waterhouse suggests in *The Stone Circles of Cumbria* that there was another circle east of Annaside and supports his theory with the farm's name, Stangrah, like the great Carnac mound Er Grah. North of this farm at Hall Foss stood 'standing stones consisting of 8 massive rude columns, disposed in a circle 25 yards in diameter'. They were destroyed at the end of the 19th century, but, like their other conscientiously murdered contemporaries, our knowledge of their former glory presents us with a very special Mother mountain in the dramatic outlines of Black Combe. Whicham Brook flows north past Kirksanton and the Giant's Grave, then bears left and passes close enough to Baldmire to render it a 'mire' worthy of its name, the brook then progressing north-east up the valley towards Swinside. See pp. 75–6 for a ground plan of Black Combe.

WOW! NOTES OF UNDERSTANDING AT THE GIANT'S GRAVE STANDING STONES, KIRKSANTON, W. CUMBRIA: 1ST APRIL 1993 CE

Revelation! A classic site that I cannot enjoy more: the two stones are beautiful lean beauties that stand like a mini-Stenness.[G] Approaching them was an honour and being here in sight of the wonderful Mother mountain and child is quite a bewildering experience. This place is a monument to aid understanding of the Ancients. The huge mountain of Black Combe lies like a huge pregnant Mother and, directly in front of the mound, baby Baldmire waits on forever. The small stone has three cup-marks at about two feet and six inches whilst the large stone has one deep cup-mark at the same height. Come to the Giant's Grave. It's a classic!

Black Combe is on all road atlases, on the A595 between the villages of Whicham and Bootle. The Giant's Grave is in a field close to the signal-box/level-crossing, on the sea side of the road.

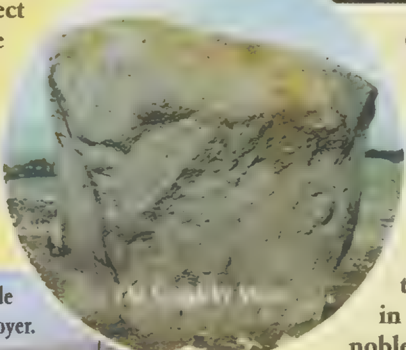
3 a) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
90. SEE BELOW

The Goggleby Stone & Kemp Howe

Cumbrian, or Cymrian, attack sheep at the Thunder Stone in Shap.

To drive through the Cumbrian town of Shap is to see a whole community built at the expense of a mini-Avebury.^{G} A stone circle at the south once led two miles north via a long stone avenue to the Hill of Skulls, a chambered barrow. On the way, the stone avenue encircled the Goggleby Stone, a large upright standing in a turnip patch. As late as 1775, Lady Lowther drew the stone avenues from behind the Kemp Howe stone circle, but there is so little left standing that the Goggleby Stone and the Thunder Stone are the only two tangibles to remind visitors of this hidden secret past. In his *Britannica* of the 16th century, the antiquary Camden had written: 'Large stones in the form of pyramids (some of them 9 foot high and 14 thick) [are] set almost in a direct line, and at equal distances, for a mile together.' Though now no more than a raise in the field, the Hill of Skulls was of enormous local legend. And when this huge barrow was destroyed at the beginning of the 19th century, even London's cosmopolitan *Gentlemen's Magazine* was moved to write; 'When the antiquary now views the remains of this remarkable monument he cannot but regret at what ... he may call the barbarous treatment it has met with.' Also known as Skellaw, or the Skellow Hill Barrow, this formerly splendid sepulchral heap field has been so ploughed over the years that it is now truly reduced to being a bump in a field. Its former vastness is suggested by the noble name Skellaw, and 'the Hill of Skulls' is surely a legendary enough name to justify its place as the terminus of the one-and-a-half mile Shap Avenue, which started all the way south at Kemp Howe. Both Jacquetta Hawkes[1] and Aubrey Burl[2] claim that the enormous glacial erratic known as the Thunder Stone, lying in a field west of the monuments, was an important part of the complex, illustrating the use of natural features whenever they are reconcilable.



Kemp Howe lies destroyed beside its destroyer.

NOTES FROM THE CAR (IN POURING RAIN) AT KEMP HOWE STONE CIRCLE, SOUTH OF SHAP, CUMBRIA: 30TH MARCH 1993 CE

These six remaining stones of beautiful Shap granite have an almost knitted outward appearance. Rolled unceremoniously out of the way to aid the building of the railway line last century, they have a camel-coloured dignity to the last... I later checked four field walls between the railway line and the A6. The walls all had a basis of large Shap granite boulders at the right places to account for avenue stones. But they tended to be seventeen to twenty-one paces apart, far less than the eighty-eight feet claimed for the width of the avenue at this point... Back towards Shap, many stones are fallen, and two erect as gateposts, one three feet high, one four feet high as we follow the avenue over the tiny river bridge.

THE GOGGLEBY STONE: 90.559152
HILL OF SKULLS/SKELLAW (SITE): 90.556155
KEMP HOWE: 90.567133
THUNDER STONE: 90.552157

The remains of Kemp Howe lie close to the railway embankment, opposite the petrol station, as you approach Shap along the A6. The Goggleby Stone lies in a field off the back road from Shap to Keld.

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[1] Jacquetta Hawkes, *The Shell Guide to Archaeolog*

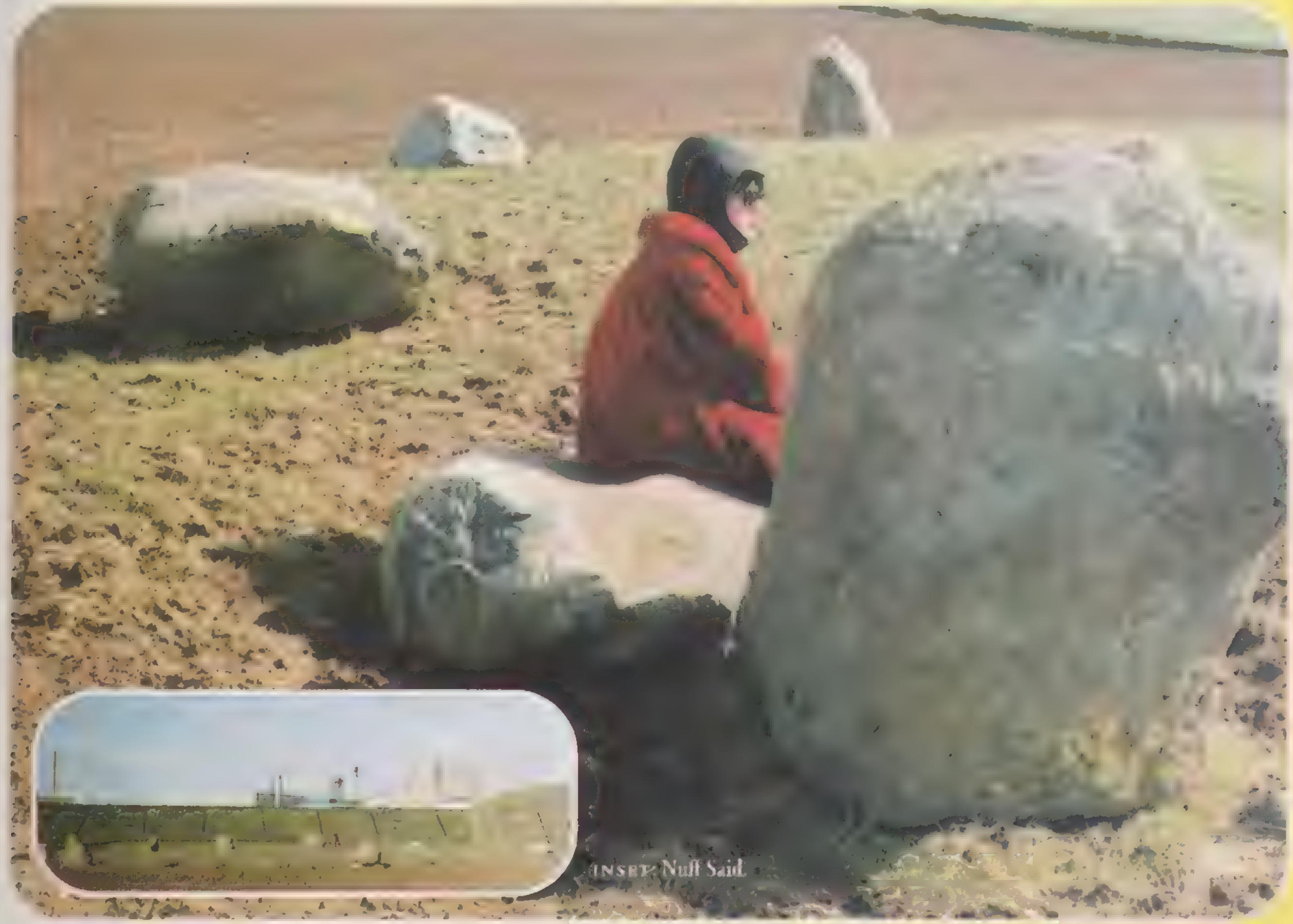
[2] Aubrey Burl, *The Stone Circles of the British Isles*

ORDNANCE SURVEY
89.034023

3 a) 7

Greycroft Stone Circle

Some ancient monuments were destined to survive against all kinds of horrific depredations. Like Strichen Recumbent stone circle in Grampian, Greycroft has been battered and raised, buried and dug up, and all in the past couple of centuries. The stones are of a volcanic lava and, surprisingly, ten of the original twelve still remain. Greycroft stands in the coastal beauty of the Irish Sea at the west and the Cumbrian mountains to the east. Unfortunately, the whole northern vista is taken up by the Sellafield nuclear power station less than one mile away. It is perhaps this atmosphere which has bred contempt for the stones of Greycroft, since the outlier stone was recently discovered dumped in the north of the circle itself. But as long ago as 1820, the tenant farmer dug all the stones up and buried them. They were not re-erected until 1949, at which time the outlier was also re-erected. That they should survive all that just to have Sellafield raised next door is a final infuriating irony.


INSET: Nuff Said.

AUTOGEDDON NOTES DEEP IN ENEMY TERRITORY, GREYCROFT STONE CIRCLE, OVERLOOKED BY SELLAFIELD, SEASCALE, W. CUMBRIA: ALL FOOLS' DAY, 1ST APRIL 1993 CE

This is the saddest place. A beautiful stone circle looking out onto the Irish Sea on the west and the Cumbrian mountains to the east. Yet 400 yards away is as unsplendid a [self-censored] as there be on the planet – Sellafield nuclear power station. Of course, it's affected everyone's attitude... The new landowner has ploughed right up to the stones of the circle. The outlier, which was until recently north of the monument, is now unceremoniously dumped next to the stone circle (I'm sitting on it whilst writing this note). Earlier on, Dorian and I went to Sellafield to see how the Greedheads control our view of this Mo Fo. Ha! Those bastards are even more cynical than we thought. There are no pictures of the dominant bastard machine that is visible from 10 miles away. But you can even get yourself a [self-censored] china model of the visitor's centre. Bland-faced, all-smiling custodians asked us if they could help and I had to get out of the hell they created and populate with their Deathtrip Lies. Now we sit in open pasture on a full blue day wondering how it ever came to this...

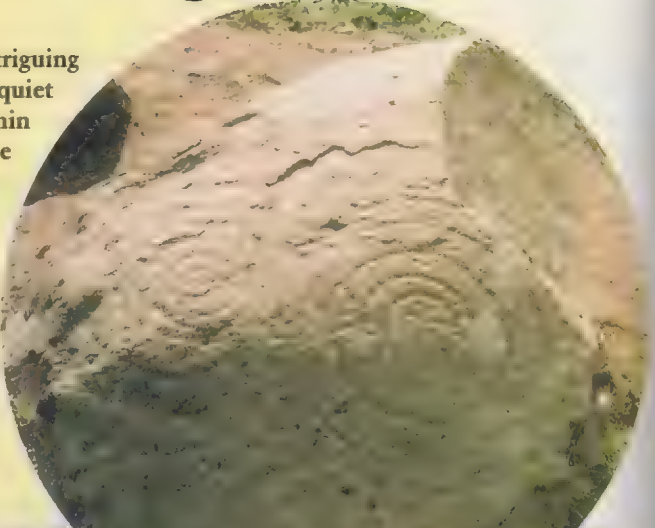
Greycroft requires an O.S. map.

3 a) 8

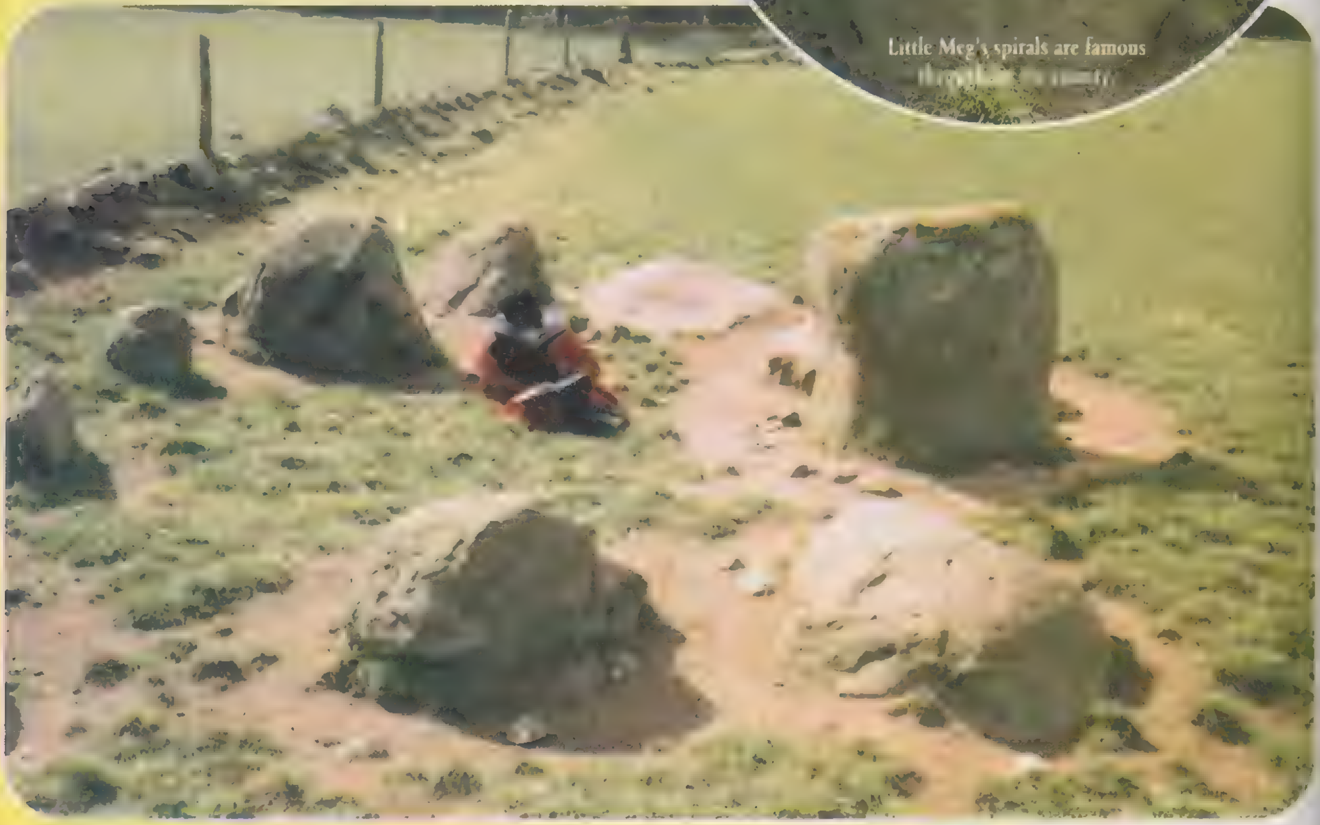
ORDNANCE SURVEY
91.576375

Little Meg

Just half a mile from Long Meg & her Daughters^{G} stands the intriguing Little Meg stone circle, a tiny but impressive kerb-circle in a quiet field. The monument stands in farmland and a large stone within the circle was fairly recently dumped there from its former place on the diameter of the circle. A mound which appeared on Dymond's plan of 1875 is no longer evident, but a slab with large carvings of concentric circles sits at the foot of the largest circle stone, though another even more elaborately carved stone was appropriated for the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle. This site began as a low barrow with a kist at its centre, ringed by a very tall kerb of large stones only twenty feet in diameter. Little Meg stands between the enormous Long Meg and the strange slumped cairn-circle at Glassonby. Both Glassonby and Little Meg were built around 1,000 years later than Long Meg & her Daughters.



Little Meg's spirals are famous throughout the country



LATE AFTERNOON NOTES AT LITTLE MEG, NEAR PENWITH, CUMBRIA: 2ND APRIL 1993 CE

It's a beautiful afternoon. Today, we went to the Glassonby circle first and then diverted to this splendidly strange site. The stones are remarkable – carved and powerful and graded confusingly, as though there is some rule that cannot be guessed at. I was disappointed with the physical remains at Glassonby because it was so important, so I had expected more above the ground. But here at Little Meg, the circle sits calmly at the edge of cultivation, awaiting the plough to prepare the new crop within ten feet of the stones. Alexander Thom says that Little Meg is orientated on the distant Friends Fell. Now, we're off for a righteous experience at Long Meg.

Follow Long Meg instructions, but continue past main circle sign, along the road about one mile. Little Meg is behind the trees on the left. Look out for a gate and walk parallel with the road. If you come to the left turn for Glassonby, you have overshot.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
91.572373

3 a) 9

Long Meg & her Daughters

The enormous stone circle of Long Meg & her Daughters, the sixth largest circle in Britain, stands on a shallow unremarkable hillside, bisected by a farm road and home to a small copse of beautiful deciduous trees. The huge outlier known as Long Meg is a marvellously carved red sandstone menhir around twelve feet tall, which Aubrey Burl believes is unrelated to the ring and of a different period. In the 1700s, William Stukeley noted that there stood a stone circle in the field beyond Long Meg, precisely where the large brick farm building now stands, suggesting all manner of complex megalithic situations. Even Long Meg herself was blasted in the eighteenth century, but the work was brought to a standstill by thunderstorms and the usual superstitions. Several stones suffered from the preliminary explosions and now lie slumped at the north edge of the circle. Legend has it that if anyone shatters Long Meg, she will run with blood. Long Meg was a mythical figure buried on the south side of Westminster Abbey, a site sacred long before the coming of Christianity. My wife counted all the stones and made it 69. She says the daughters story is just a Christian smokescreen and much prefers the alternative – that the stones were Meg's 69 lovers.

INSET: Long Meg with her two Consorts.

EARLY EVENING NOTES AT LONG MEG, NEAR PENWITH, CUMBRIA: 2ND APRIL 1993 CE

It's hard to write. We've been here at Long Meg for over two hours now and what with the curiousness that took me over, my hands are no longer sensible with the pen. Long Meg is a mysterious place. Everyone has theories about it and everyone here is an enthusiast. Today, we went to Little Meg^{G} first and I loved the spirals on the side of one of the fallen stones. Then we read some of Thom's theories about the way the sites are linked with the horizon hills and are finding it hard now to leave. Long Meg is on a slope, not steep at all, but it's a large circle and that makes the slope more unlikely. The one at Almendres is much steeper and is in an olive grove. Long Meg is a much more expansive affair with few trees blocking the views. All the stones at Long Meg look worked – they are probably not, but I'm not sure at all. There are 69 daughters (or lovers, which suits the 69 better) all strewn around, so big that there's even a farm track through the centre. Long Meg is unreal at times, a three-sided pillar of sandstone, carved with spirals and each side majestic and different from the others. Oh, and Long Meg is a totem pole, too. The stones are placed flatest side inwards, any bulge out at the back, and many of the fallen stones can only be placed in position by using this method. Some stones are out of position. In the 18th century, Stukeley drew Long Meg with another circle behind to the south-west. A day at Long Meg is a righteous experience – I scour the horizon, I check out Meg's three-faced beauty, and I smile a lot.

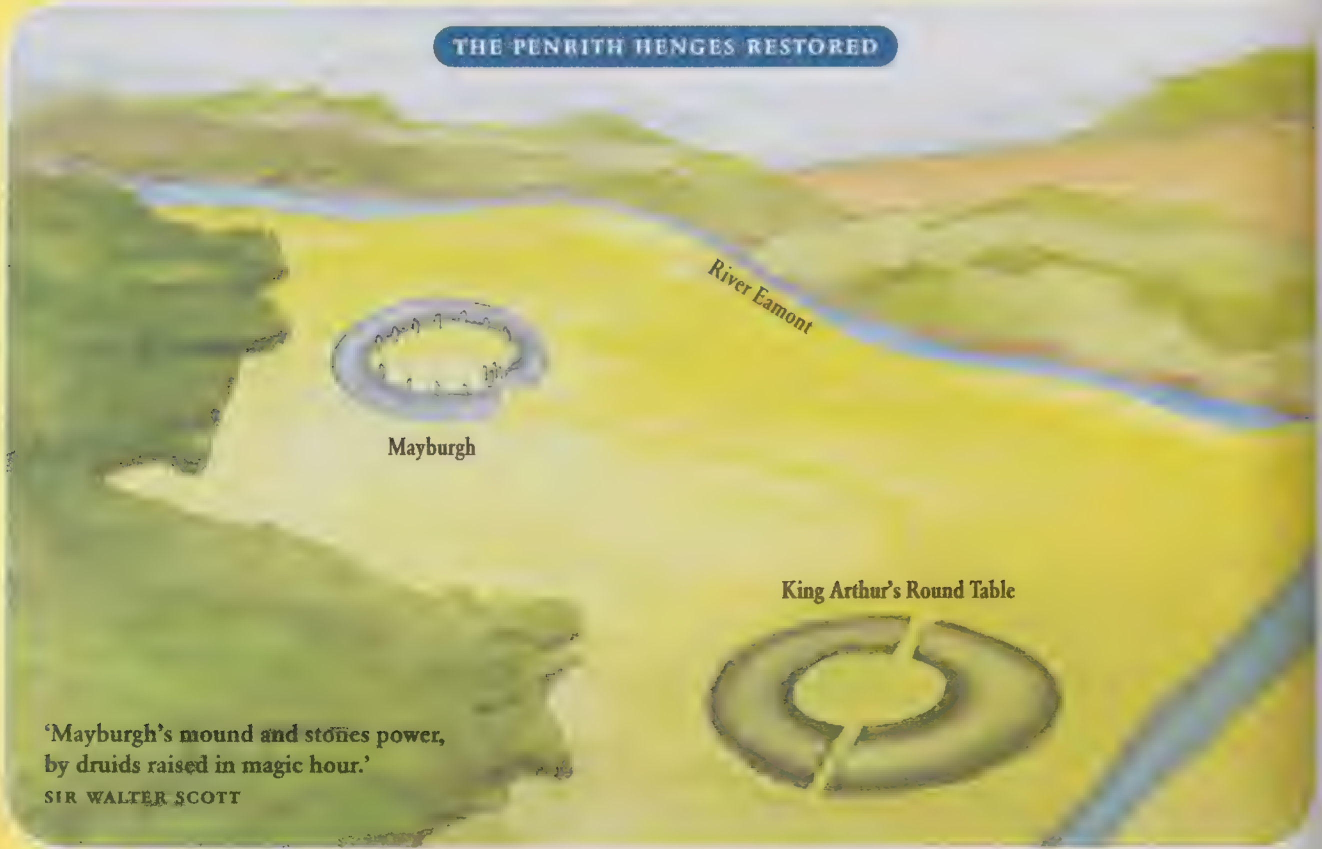
Travel to Little Salkend, north-west of Penrith. Long Meg is signposted from the village.

3 a) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
90.(MAY)519284/(ART)524284

Mayburgh & King Arthur's Round Table

The two henges of Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table stand close to the south bank of the river Eamont where three henges used to be. Mayburgh is a great circular ring of water-washed pebbles, showing that the henge couple work as a ditchless monument. Now, only one large standing stone nine feet tall remains where four stood in William Stukeley's time. This stone set in the centre was accompanied by another four stones flanking the entrance. King Arthur's Round Table is a far more typical henge, almost circular and over 100 paces across. According to Nicholas Thomas' *Prehistoric England*, until the 17th century two standing stones stood outside the northern entrance. But the last centuries have seen huge upheavals at Arthur's, the low mound on the central plateau and the flat berm between the ditch and bank being 19th-century creations, and the whole site being used as a tea garden for many years.



THE PENRITH HENGES RESTORED

'Mayburgh's mound and stones power,
by druids raised in magic hour.'
SIR WALTER SCOTT

BRIEF NOTES FROM MAYBURGH HENGE ENTRANCEWAY OUT TO KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE, PENRITH, CUMBRIA: MIDDAY, 29TH JULY 1992 CE

High on the henge! Two henges, and how they complement each other. I do believe that Mayburgh came later, its great stone banks thrown up quickly for some splendid Neolithic devotional – the entrance is fixed on the smaller but more exquisite earth circle of King Arthur's Round Table, around 250 yards to my south-east. All that is left, ha. In 1939, they cut King Arthur in half but what remains is … well, what remains. At Mayburgh, the M6 runs so close to it as to worry everyone who has *not* been here. But a visit will soon prompt the certain truth: no meddling motorway can destroy this ancient and divine space. One lone megalith remains, lonely yet significant of what was once here. Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table have me kippered and wondrous all over again.

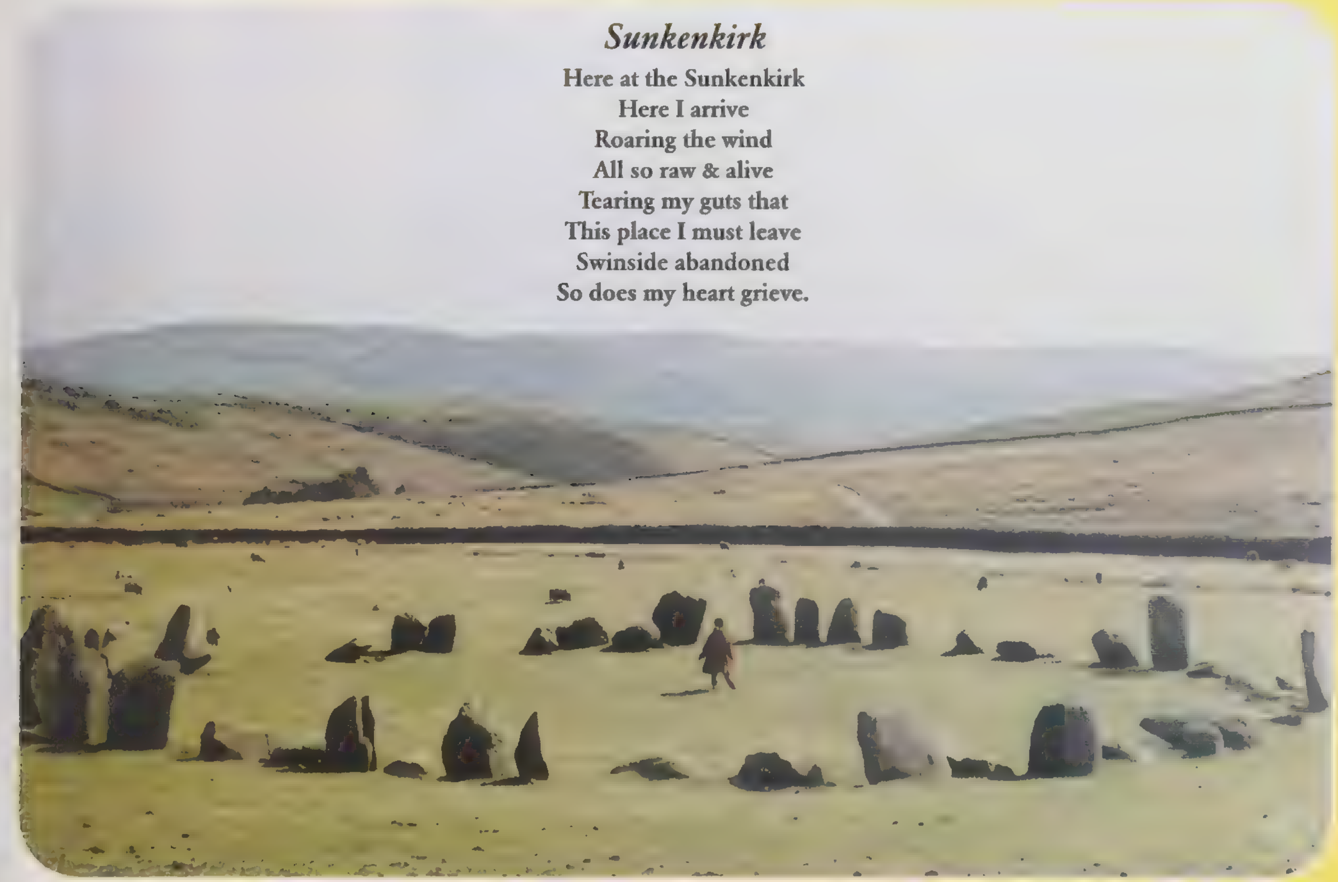
King Arthur's Round Table is situated at Eamont Bridge, right at the junction of the A6 and the B5320 to Yanwath and Pooley Bridge. Mayburgh is 400 yards away, easily visible and close to the motorway.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
96.172882

3 a) 11

Sunkenkirk

Sunkenkirk stands far removed from people, in the high green lands of Swinside farm north of Duddon Sands. In the seventies and eighties, European Pagans, witches, etc., performed their great rites at Sunkenkirk. The journey to the stone circle is one of tremendous anticipation 'punctuated by numerous prominent outliers and oblique passes, creating prolonged pilgrimage, fleeting views of the site and sudden arrival', as Thompson & Williams write in their *Power of Place.* Fifty-five of the original sixty stones survive, all large slabs of porphyritic slate. These 'grey cobbles', as they are known locally, are very similar to the stones of Drombeg in Cork in their mass and their distribution. An 1806 edition of *Camden's Brittanica* told of a central standing stone, but nothing since has been recorded. In 1901, excavations discovered that Sunkenkirk's ground had first been levelled and prepared before the erecting of the stones. Burl has noted that the large Ballynoe circle in Northern Ireland was also constructed on a similar levelled platform. Like the Chapel O'Sink in Aberdeenshire, legend has it that Sunkenkirk sank because the Devil was jealous.



Sunkenkirk

Here at the Sunkenkirk
Here I arrive
Roaring the wind
All so raw & alive
Tearing my guts that
This place I must leave
Swinside abandoned
So does my heart grieve.

AWED NOTES FROM THE SWINSIDE STONE CIRCLE, HIGH ABOVE EVERYTHING: MID-AFTERNOON, 31ST MARCH 1993 CE

Only the sheep are at Swinside today. And even the sheep here are different. Two kinds: one grey/silver and eating continuously; the other brown and cream, horned like goats and eating continuously. Dorian and I have been sitting here in the same place for some time now, high up above the roads and removed from everything. Swinside is forever here – its stones almost contiguous and wall-like, none huge, the largest about seven feet tall, yet there is no way to keep my eyes from it. The all-blue day is passing and winds from the sea have blown dreamy pale grey clouds over us as we sit sheltered against the farmer's wall … he loves the stones and even danced with the Pagans last time an international gathering took place here. This beautiful circle is perfect from all angles. Even the half-mile walk was intriguing as the stones are visible from a great distance, clustered together in a field and, at that distance, seemingly without shape or design. Now, the wind is howling and we must leave this extra-special plateau. Mountains, mountains, forever mountains. And so unreachable to most people that this Sunkenkirk is a place for the most righteous devotion.

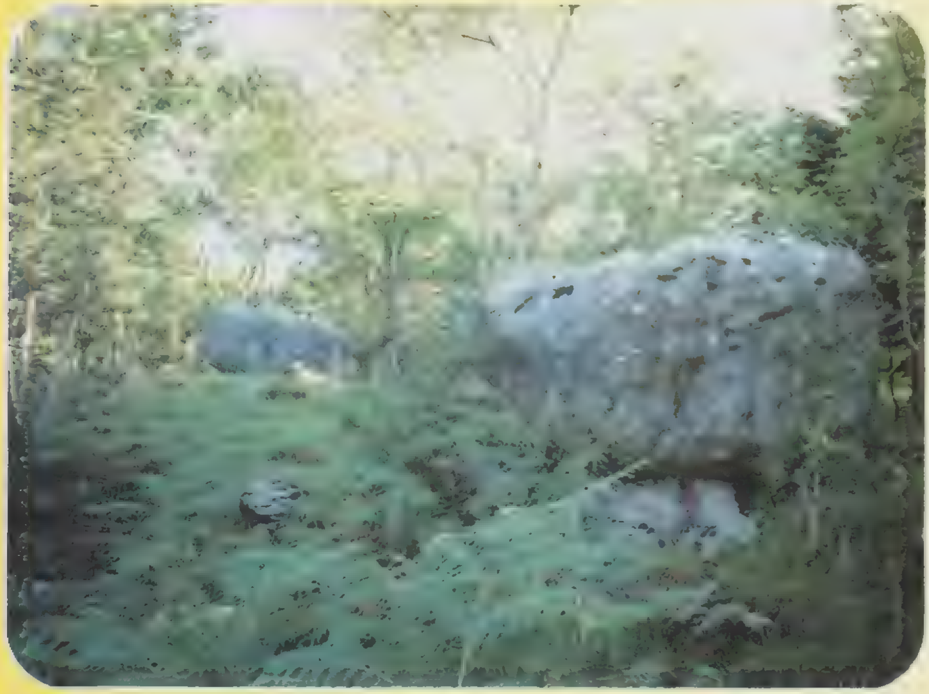
Sunkenkirk needs an O.S. map

3 a) 12

ORDNANCE SURVEY
97.495735

The Three Brothers

Overlooking the Morecambrian Sands east of the Ver centre at Furness, the Three Brothers are a trio of fabulous natural altars situated high on Warton Crag, standing in thick woodland upon natural rocky plinths. They were surveyed by Alexander Thom, who made a very strange survey, probably due to the fact that tree cover is now so indomitable that the Three Brothers themselves are barely intervisible. The quiet power of the Three Brothers is their situation in such a landscape of the Great Goddess. The river Keer, or 'Koeur', enters Morecambe Bay via the Keer Channel and the Kent Channel. Now almost lost in the creeping vegetation, this trio of rocking stones would have been superbly inspiring on their formerly treeless summit, as though ready to ring like great bells at any moment.



NOTES FROM THE THREE BROTHERS, MORECAMBE BAY, LANCS: 7.30 A.M., 29TH AUGUST 1996 CE

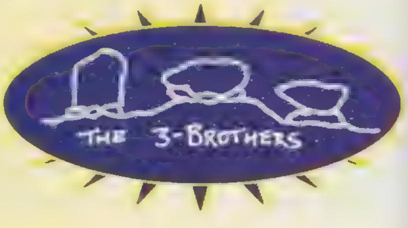
High up above the bay, in new forest surrounded by thick underbrush and many outcrops of rock, stand the Three Brothers, three 'natural' hill altars possibly placed here in some remote age and used forever until their time went. Now, they are extremely hard to get to but wonderful to find. The view across Morecambe Bay to some unseen southwesterly point is now covered in large dense groups of trees, but the land here slopes dramatically away in front of me, suggesting the oracle stone at Newcraig or some of the natural stones in the Peak. If the natural arrangement of these three stones appealed to ancient Man, this would make great sense, but their positioning at such strategic points suggests that they may have been intentionally placed here. Whatever, their lingering name and position show some undoubted 'meaning'.

This site requires an O.S. map and an attitude.

Across the Morecambrian Sands

1.
Three Brothers
All planted with trees,
The view surrendered
Neither taking nor giving
Three Brothers ... one, two, three.
2.
Three statues and on plinths they rock
Gently and in perfect harmony
Their power not disputed,
Not denied, ne'er discussed –
But once, this powerhouse was Our house
And once these Brothers were living
All taking and giving
All seen and unseen
Dynamic shadows.
3.
Now, in Realtime-confused
All power but their very mettle
Nests in brittle glimpses
Of silvered sparkling otherworlds
4.
But still they do...
Penetrate
The uneven frosts that numb us to their Sabre-cool.
And still they do...
Resonate
As arcane bells Un-pitched
Across the Morecambrian sands
Freestanding & colossal
Ambassadors of the first world
Three Brothers –
A gift from a lost world.

WRITTEN AT THE CULLODEN HOUSE HOTEL, 1ST SEPTEMBER 1996 CE



ORDNANCE SURVEY
119.241630

The Andle Stone

The huge natural altar known as the Andle Stone stands on the brow of the Black Knowle overlooking the verdant beauty of the Lathkill Valley. The Andle Stone stands surrounded by its own drystone wall and masses of lilac ferns, a single megalithic jewel in a landscape crown. It is around fifteen feet long by ten feet wide and ten feet high, with deep cup-marks carved on its summit. In his *Ten Years Digging in Celtic and Saxon Grave Hills,* Thomas Bateman writes that: 'On passing over the brow of the hill, near the Andle Stone, we noticed a small circle of six stones, four of which retained their upright position, whilst two were prostrate, the diameter being about twenty feet.' It is most likely that these were the stones of Doll Tor stone circle, stones which survive to this day, but which have been horribly injured in recent years. When I arrived at Doll Tor on the 6th June 1994 CE, forestry wardens were surveying the 're-erected circle by persons unknown'. They had re-erected stones that were fallen, they had brought stones in place of missing stones. They then re-erected the cairn but made it look like a shooting hide. Doll Tor Stone Circle is at O.S. Number: 119.238628.

INSET: Doll Tor stone circle.

NOTES FROM ATOP AN UNKNOWN AND MASSIVE STONE ON THE ROAD TO THE NINE LADIES STONE CIRCLE: BETWEEN STANTON-IN-THE-PEAK AND STANTON LEES: 7TH MAY 1991 CE

An unbelievable view … An exquisite adrenalin courses through me. A screaming like a Callanish[G] complex. Argh… A boulder stone fifteen feet high atop a Peak District mountain. Oh, we have seen heaven today in these hills. No man-made ancient heaven – an earth mystery of sublime perfection.

NOTES FROM THE ANDLE STONE, DERBYSHIRE: VISIT NO. 2 – TUESDAY 21ST MAY 1991 CE

Here we are once more atop the wonderful Andle Stone. The weather is hot, windy yet so hot, the sky blue all around and the sun so righteously overhead. There is no sound, no sound at all. The wind blasts all sound, picks it up and scatters it across the valley. This stone is so vast and so ancient – the cup-marks and the setting of this jewel within bushes and its low wall is even beyond the Neolithic monuments that I cherish. For it represents a time even before the decision to farm. This stone is for the very heart of hunting-gathering man. This world is so very perfect as I cannot see beyond it right now.

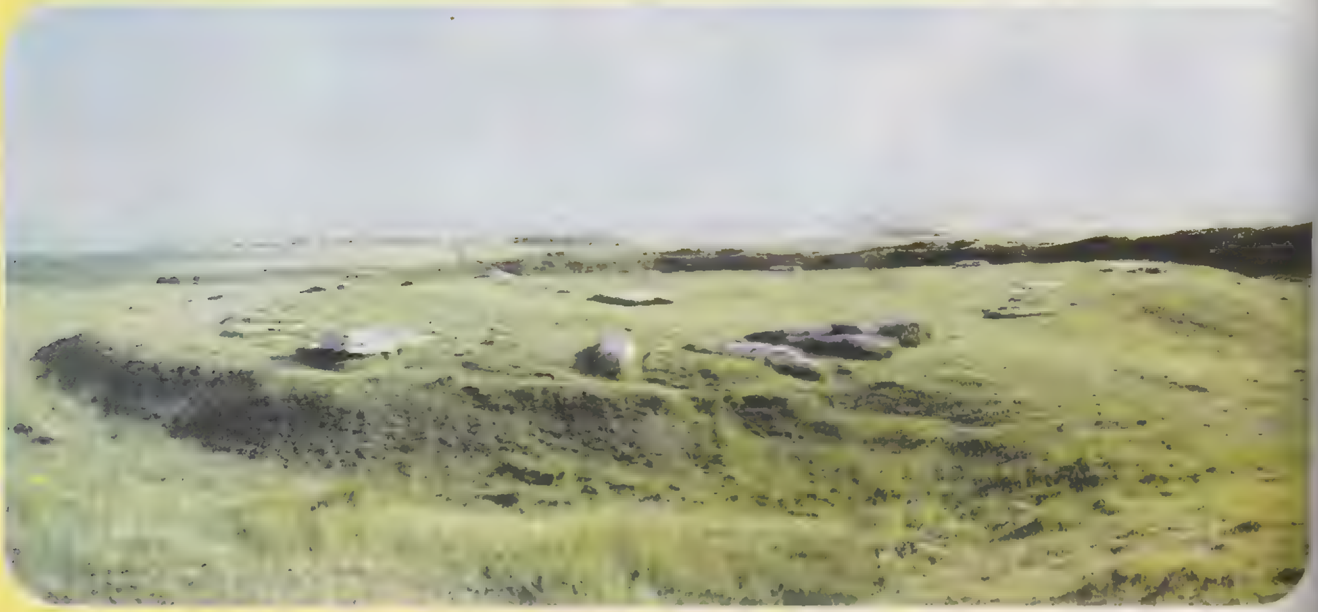
The Andle Stone is to the right of travellers passing along the road from Stanton-in-the-Peak to Birchover. Climb until the view opens out – the Andle Stone reveals breathtaking views.

Arbor Low

The great henge and hill altar of Arbor Low and Gib Hill stand atop the north side of Middleton Common, the Roman road which passes within yards of Gib Hill, a testament to this monument's ancient importance. All of its limestone longstones are fallen, including the huge central Cove setting, giving the impression of a gigantic megalithic clockface. The exposed limestone was forced down by the gales from the centuries of north winds upon this barren hilltop. Aubrey Burl has argued for Arbor Low being a series of monuments, beginning with the Cove at the centre and following with the bank and ditch. Later came the circle of stones and finally a Bronze Age barrow was inserted upon the henge bank itself. The Gib Hill tumulus, Arbor Low's miniature Silbury,^{G} was semi-linked by a partially-finished earthwork avenue leading most of the 330 yards from the henge. Gib Hill is still impressive on its hilltop, though no thanks to Thomas Bateman, who excavated the hill altar during 1848 and cut out the main burial kist, removing it to his own garden. Happily, it was returned to the centre of Gib Hill in 1938.

Arbor Low

Fleeting inside of me
Yes, I have travelled
Travelled to Arbor Low?
Yes, I have travelled.
Prayers & moments as I lay alone,
Inside the clockface
Of recumbent stone.



NOTES FROM ARBOR LOW HENGE, DERBYSHIRE PEAK DISTRICT: 7TH MAY 1991 CE, MID-AFTERNOON

I'm sitting against a huge recumbent stone in the centre of the henge. The weather is overcast and doomy, yet minutes ago it was wildly sunny and the wind blew my head off. Arbor Low is a strange place – lean and deserted, its stones scattered around the inner ring like a badly made clock that has been roughed up in the mail. Cows and birds make their noises, as do the distant motorbikes in the far-off hills. Arbor Low is confusing … I cannot see the whole place as one thing; it is littered about me… Now, see? The sun is blazing down on me. And as I look around, the place has become Little Avebury.^{G} As I climb down into the ditch and up onto the heng Gib Hill comes into view – a smaller version of Silbury. This place is beautiful but less impressive because of the stones How strange, for it nevertheless is extraordinary and I fee shallow and stupid for not groaning under a weight o ancientness.

Arbor Low is in most road atlases. On the A515, from Ashbourne to Buxton, take the right turn for Youlgreave (from the A515, Gib Hill is a landmark on the horizon at right). Arbor Low is a right turn at the first farm-track. Beware loud barking of farm dogs (all chained). Admission 50 pence.

Barbrook One

There are three stone circles on the sullen gritstone of Barbrook Moor, though this book will discuss only one, as the author explains in the poem. Prosaically known as Barbrook One, this stone circle stands on the remote borders between Ramsey Moor and Big Moor, on the high crags overlooking the river Derwent. On a clear day, the view extends to the limestone ridges ten miles away. At Barbrook One, a low circular embankment around fifteen paces across houses a circle of twelve low standing stones, the tallest only three feet three inches high. The only excavation took place 'before 1939', as Aubrey Burl enigmatically writes, the work being carried out by the Duke of Rutland's gamekeeper! He found only three flints but left two large scars across the circle where his trenches had been. These ditches were recently re-excavated and refilled in a harmonious manner.

Y BARD OF BARBROOK ONE
(5.30 A.M.)

1.
I fell into a gulley
down at Barbrook One
Fine mornings did inspire
And the day had just begun,
I was in a big old truck
Communing with the sun
When I fell into the gulley
Down at Barbrook One.

2.
Depressed at my predicament
So early in the day
I so hoped to scurry out of there
But doubts got in the way,
Sunk at forty-five degrees
With my bonnet to the sun
How I slid into that gulley
Down at Barbrook One.

You know when things have
taken
Just long enough to seem
That they won't be quick got over
And it isn't all a dream?
Well, as that moment happened,
And waiting for a glitch,
The four-wheel drive kicked in
And I went sailing out the ditch,

I hate
that I'm a driver
I swear
I won't [illegible]
[illegible]
Barbrook One.

NOTES ON BIG MOOR, BARBROOK STONE CIRCLE, PEAK DISTRICT: 6.20 A.M., 7TH JUNE 1994 CE

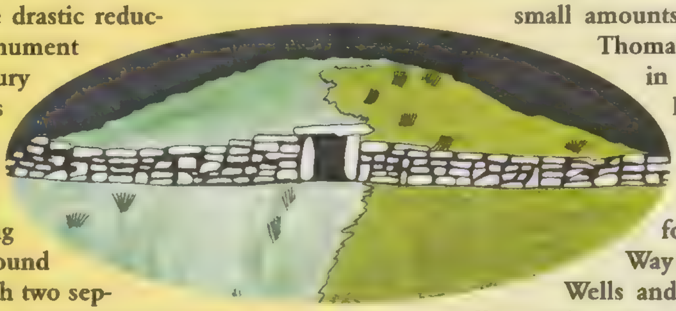
What a day! This tiny stone circle has magnificent views south but all I can see is an endless sea of mist blanketing every horizon. The tallest stones are no more than two-and-a-half feet high and yet this place has all the self-direction of the best amphitheatre. It is impossible not to take up a position on one of the stones and stare down over the trees that hide Barlow and the whole Derby Dales area. On arrival here, my polaroid screwed up and blinked and beeped and wouldn't photograph, whilst the sheep and cows stared at this tense city incomer in their midst.

Barbrook requires an O.S. map.

3 b) 4

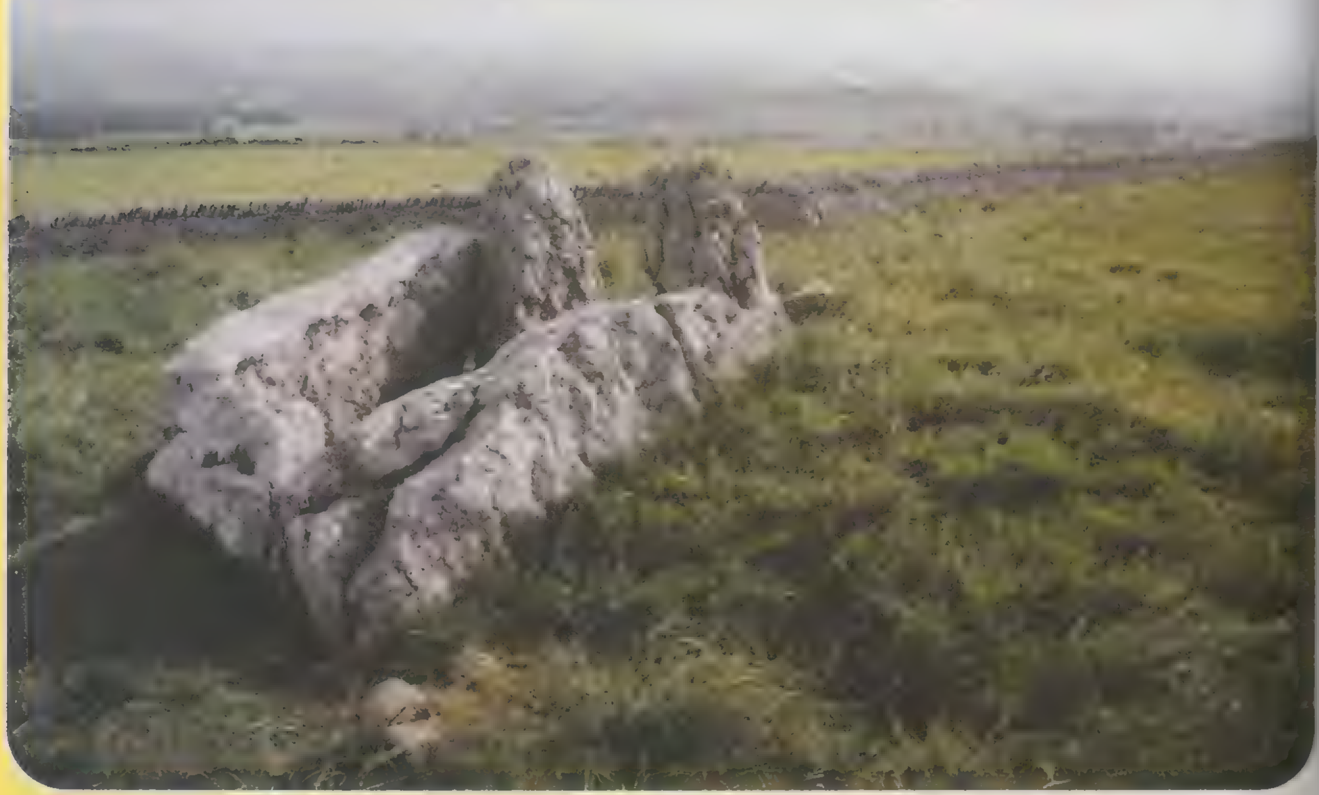
ORDNANCE SURVEY
119.124711

Five Wells



The remarkable position of the Five Wells chamber, high on the most northern part of Taddington Moor, allays some of the disappointment at the drastic reductions in size which the monument has suffered from 19th-century busybodies. With huge views north and west across the Wye Valley, the visitor will be naturally drawn to the great chamber, the only remaining relic of what was once a round barrow thirty yards across with two separate burials set back-to-back. At the entrance are two large pillars, both leaning but still in place. The two chambers were approached down passageways, the entire creation then roofed with heavy capstones. This magnificent structure housed at least twelve burials, plus flints and small amounts of Neolithic pottery, when Thomas Bateman excavated the site in 1846. Five more skeletons have been found on the site since then. In *Prehistoric England*, Nicholas Thomas suggested an Irish ancestry for the barrow. The Limestone Way passes the front of the Five Wells and descends the hill to Priestcliffe Ditch, past ancient cultivation terraces and the cairned hill above the village of Priestcliffe, or Bree's Cliff.

OVAL ABOVE: My conjectural reconstruction of the Five Wells is included in order to show what outrages this noble monument has suffered.



NOTES WITH FREEZING HANDS, FIVE WELLS, PEAK DISTRICT: 11TH JUNE 1994 CE

This great tomb has suffered dreadfully at the hands of past diggers and explorers. Yet its main chamber is still intact – three enormous slabs create the box in which I write this note this freezing June morning high up on the moors. It's coming up to 8 a.m. and the sun sweeps its rays across the valleys below, blasting me with the occasional but so welcomed heat, before dying behind the black clouds that tear at high spee across the sky. All around, it is impossible to trace the shape this formerly splendid structure, but now the real pleasure is sit high aloof from the real world, and feel the presence of Ancients' hilltop world. The cloud has moved south and I write the sun deluges the chamber and birds twitter in a roy psychosis of pleasure.

Five Wells requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
110.128837

3 b) 5

Mam Tor

Mam Tor was the sacred prehistoric heart of this High Peak area, her name transliterating as 'heights of the Mother'. It is a breathtaking place, situated at the western end of the marvellous ridge which begins at the sacred Lose, or Lugh's, Hill, overlooking the two valleys of the rivers Hope and Edale. Mam Tor stands at a height of 1,700 feet with long dazzling views to the massif of Kinder Scout to the north-west. For early Humanity, this great mountain began as a natural representation of the Great Mother and stone circles such as the Seven Stones of Hordron^{G} were built in her thrall. At the base of the Tor is the Blue John cavern, yielder of the semi-precious Blue John stone famous throughout Britain. But by the Bronze Age, population explosions were beginning to force people onto higher defensible ground. Mam Tor was all that and more, a Mother mountain with a living stream, known as Odin's Sitch, issuing from its teat. Along with Lugh and Lud, Germanic references abound in the High Peak, also seen at the Odin mine at the foot of Mam Tor. Like Grimspound^{G} on Dartmoor, this settlement on Mam Tor was impregnable for as long as food supplies lasted. Excavations by Manchester students in the 1960s unearthed vast amounts of unusual pottery, plain and poorly made and quite at odds with all other Bronze Age finds from the Peak District. But the real find was a polished ceremonial stone axe, along with fragments of bronze axes also. On the south side of Mam Tor, landslides from the mountain have been so bad that the A625 has been abandoned just below the Blue John cave. The main road between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Castleton comes to a dramatic and outrageous stop at this point, breaking into a bizarre B-road diversion.

THE NATIONAL TRUST
MAM TOR
PLEASE

The A625 between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Castleton is permanently diverted because of the rock slides which have ravaged some of Mam Tor's east face.

Lugh's Hill aka Lose Hill.

NOTES AT MAM TOR, HIGH PEAK: 2ND MAY 1998 CE

It is so exhilarating to sit in the thrall of this Mother hill, knowing that it has been influencing us since time immemorial. How did people live on Mam Tor? It seems impossible as a home, so they must have had no choice whatsoever. Yet Mam Tor is responsible for the diversion of the A625 from Chapel-en-le-Frith to Castleton. I'm sitting where the landslide covered the main road and the whole 360-degree view is quite bewildering. Win Hill justs out to the west, whilst Lugh's Hill [sic], now less defined at the north-east, still forms a mighty ridge up to Mam Tor. In blue sky I write this, in Beltane bliss I write this.

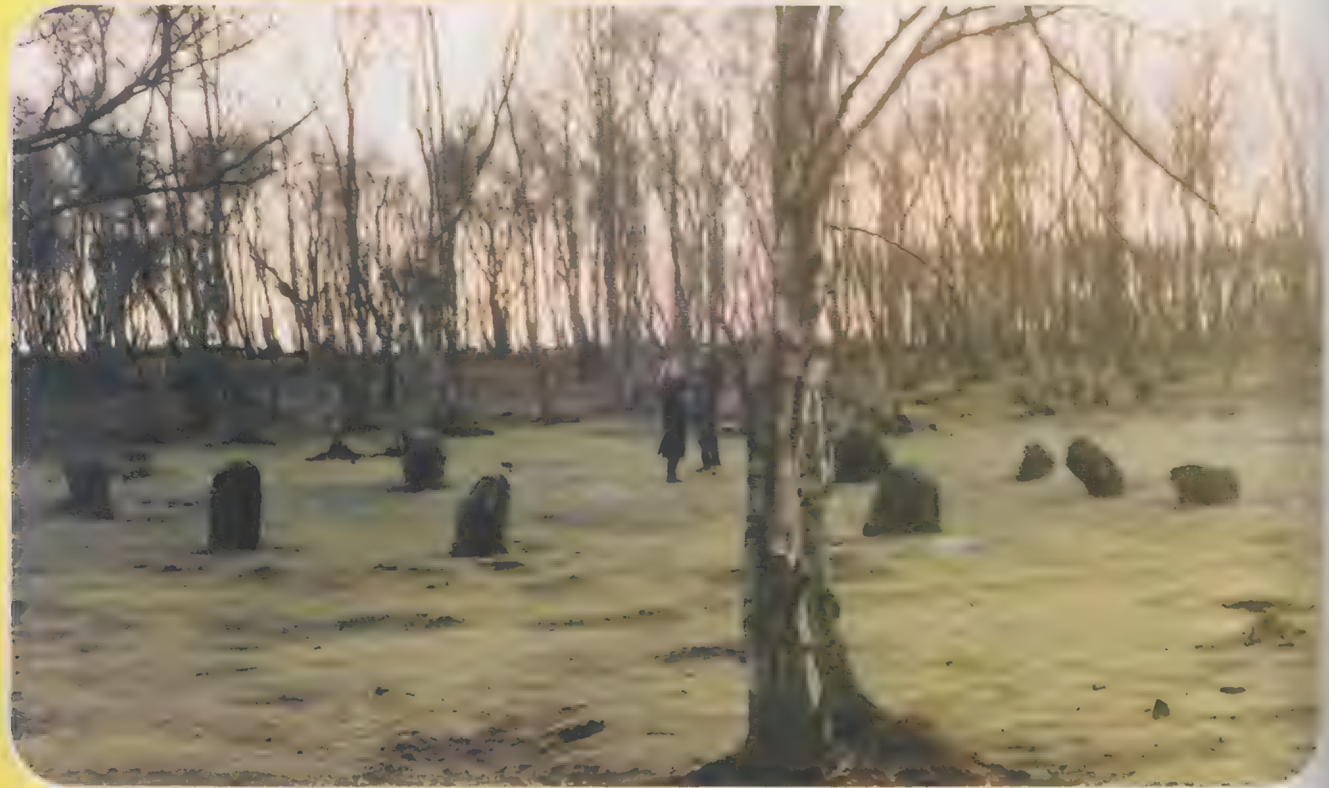
Mam Tor is on the A625 east of Chapel-en-le-Frith. Rockfalls around its base have caused the main road to be diverted.

3 b) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
119.249635

Nine Ladies of Stanton Moor

The low mystery of the Nine Ladies stone circle stands in recent patchy tree growth on high Stanton Moor. At least seventy cairns have been discovered in the enormous Bronze Age cemetery on Stanton Moor, most of them ruinous through the excavations of the last centuries – collared urns and cremations have been discovered. But the atmosphere is one of prehistoric exhilaration, with large natural rock icons overlooking the sacred Derwent Valley, which falls away dramatically to the east. The Nine Ladies are now ten stones, one a mysterious modern intruder, set into a low and wide rubble bank. The circle stones are made of millstone grit and none are over three feet tall. Aubrey Burl has suggested entrances within the low banks at the north-east and south-west. Around forty paces to the west-south-west stands the tiny Fiddler's stone. This outlier has been moved several times, was cracked by a car driver and formerly stood in its own low wall. The circle was excavated by the late J. C. Heathcote and his son J. P. Heathcote, FSA. These two local archaeologists lived in nearby Birchover and all their finds are kept at a private museum in the village.



NOTES (WITH VERY COLD HANDS) FROM THE NINE LADIES STONE CIRCLE, PEAK DISTRICT, DERBYSHIRE: 7TH MAY 1991 CE

I am smiling stupidly and delightedly. I'm sitting down, my back against the Fiddler's stone or King's stone, the outlier stone about thirty yards from the circle. Gone is the awful wall which used to surround the Ladies (and which I had anticipated all day).* My feet tingle and my mouth is pursed as I try to remain normal. This circle is so exquisite – tiny and so very Pagan. Practical and feminine, it is surrounded by trees and the bleating of young lambs filters across on the wind. In the centre is a darkened patch of soil, possibly from recent Wiccan rituals. Further down the track, I passed the remains of the 'archaeoligically excavated' tumulus ... but this circle is everything and I am entranced once more.

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* A dreadfully inappropriate stone wall formerly surrounded the nine stones.

Stanton Moor is the high ground between the villages of Birchover, Stanton-in-the-Peak and Stanton Lees. The circle is situated to the north. Approach from the south to grasp the past – the moor is littered with over seventy shattered cairns and tumuli.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
119.SEE BELOW

3 b) 7

Nine Stones Close & Robin Hood's Stride

The tragedy of these great stones upon Harthill Moor, formerly known as the Grey Ladies, is that so many have perished, for the survivors tell a tale of former greatness. Only an arc of four large six foot-plus standing stones survives from an original circle of nine in all. John Barnatt has noted that 'Old drawings show that most of the missing stones were slightly smaller than those which have survived', as can be seen from the former circle stone embedded in the drystone wall directly below Robin Hood's Stride. The role of Robin Hood's Stride is that of sacred hill altar, looking like a cross between a great Dartmoor Tor and the weird water altar of Tomen-y-Faerdre. One of the seven-foot stones was a giant of eleven feet until its re-erection in 1936. Perhaps Charles King, author of the 1799 *Munimenta Antiqua*, was not exaggerating when he wrote: 'In Derbyshire also, on Hartle Moor, is a Druid circle at present of six stones; one of which is 17 feet high.' When Thomas Bateman, the famous Derbyshire antiquary, visited the site in 1847, there were seven stones still upright. It is possible that the unsuccessful 1877 excavation, by William Greenwell and Llewellyn Jewitt, accounted for the loss of stones. Excavation may have caused at least one of the stones to be undermined. Aubrey Burl has suggested that the natural stones of Robin Hood's Stride look like 'the head and pricked-up ears of a wrinkled hippopotamus. From the circle, the major southern moon sets between the ears and this may be the reason for the situation of the ring.'

NB There is an interesting prehistoric earthwork called Castle Ring behind the nearby farmhouse. Ask permission to view it.

NOTES FROM NINE STONES CLOSE, HARTHILL, DERBYSHIRE: TUESDAY 21ST MAY 1991 CE

I'm sitting in the Nine Stones Close, my back against the straightest stone, looking out to the rocky outcrops with my back to the main road and the farm. I walked perhaps one mile alone and crossed through the sheep to these four enormous stones, each one over six feet tall. Two of them are weather-grooved like the Devil's Arrows and the four are in an arc. Some say they are the remains of a longbarrow but they have the natural arc of a ruined stone circle. In this extraordinary surrounding, dotted with bizarre rocky outcrops and the huge horizon of Robin Hood's Stride, even these beauties are rather overwhelmed. And so their magic is not merely size alone – no, they have inside them a secret. I fell asleep ten minutes ago alone between two of them – I was driven awake with a jolt and, towering above my head, this stone that I lie against was a giant of incredible proportions. And again, as I looked up from my writing, the stones did their jolting inside me. Perhaps there is some truth to the petrifaction legend. The peace that I feel here is as that of the Andle Stone.[G] It is the small peace of a man reassured of his small place in the world.

These sites require an O.S. map.

NINE STONES CLOSE: 119.225626
ROBIN HOOD'S STRIDE: 119.224624
CASTLE RING: 119.221628

3 b) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
110.216868

Seven Stones of Hordron Edge

The Seven Stones of Hordron Edge occupy a magical position overlooking the Upper Derwent Valley, now expanded to the great blueness of Ladybower reservoir. At the steep Hordron Edge in the lea of Moscar Moor, the stone circle looks out to the distant magical hills of Mam Tor^{G} and Win Hill at the south-west, whilst the black massif of Kinder Scout rises distantly almost due west seven miles away over the Madwoman's Stones. The Seven Stones are really ten stones of millstone grit, seven of which still stand, though it is likely that around twenty-six filled the circle in its original form. They have a diameter of approximately sixteen paces and are situated in a place of real magic. In his book *Places of Power*, Paul Devereux talks of the Seven Stones as a site of earth lights and happenings. Standing in the centre of the ring, the stone directly between Mam Tor and Win Hill is called the Fairy stone. This is because so many reports of lights around it have been recorded. It is possible that the lights have generated from the distant hills of Mam Tor, Kinder Scout and Win Hill, but been perceived as emanating at the stone circle by those experiencing the phenomenon and wishing to attribute it all to the stones. Conversely, Paul Devereux has written: 'I think the Hordron fairy stone may relate to an aspect of the "intrinsic nature" of this location.'

From Hordron Edge, the Mother mountains of Win Hill and Mam Tor rise dramatically to the west.

THE HORDRON EDGE – NOTES AT THE SEVEN STONES, IN THE THRALL OF WIN HILL AND MAM TOR, PEAK DISTRICT: 2ND MAY 1998 CE

This bright May morning has me shaken, but the placing of the seven stones was never more enlightened. Ten small stones form a ragged ring on the high edge of this cliff, or 'clough'.

But in the near distance, the sacred mountains of Mam Tor and Win Hill rise up magnificently to the west, with the flat-hulled ark of Kinder Scout terrorising the north-westerly horizon above Cook Hill. I rose early from my guest house this morning and was on Edge by 7 a.m. What a clear perfect day!

The Seven Stones require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
101.(TOP)872934/(HOW)937916

Blakey Topping & Howden

Strange on the Causeway on Howden Hill

1.
On Howden Hill
Resumes cluck clucking
The time that stopped
When I first shrill
Did call the name of Howden Hill
2.
At Blakey Topping –
Sister Hill
Four miles across the Langdale Forest,
Time is hiccuping and stalling
At my visit, so Nth-rawling.
3.
Rows an arcane people down
The Crosscliff Beck to where I'm sat,
As Derwent to his Mother Forest
Pressed her bosom to his face,
Of species, tribes and human race
The Time that stopped
Does feel me thrill –
Strange on the causeway on Howden Hill.

AFTERNOON ON THE HILL: 29/10/96 CE

Blakey Topping
as seen from
Thompson's
Rigg.

SEE CHAPTER 3, PAGES 86–7

In the area of Langdale Forest north of the Yorkshire Wolds, two great sacred hills stand four miles apart and visible from one another. Blakey Topping is a magnificent Mother hill with the remains of a stone circle at its feet and as wild a topography as I ever did see, whilst Howden is a Silbury^G in a faerie landscape. Unfortunately, whilst both hills are easy to visit, it is difficult to cross from one to another, as there are private farms in unlikely places. Approached from the Hole of Horcum, a vast natural crater to the west, the traveller arrives at Blakey Topping along the ancient Old Wives' Way. Horcum means 'the valley of Hoeur', from which root word we find 'whore', 'her' and other such female words. Ancient trackways around Horcum's colossal rim lead directly along the Old Wives' Way to a meeting with Blakey Topping deserving of a *Close Encounters* tag. Blakey Topping looks as though it were born from the nearby hillside below Hazelhead Moor. Four miles to the west, linked to Blakey Topping by the steep-sided Crosscliffe Beck, stands Howden Hill on the river Derwent, another great sacred hill. This conical altar is clearly known locally as a seat of natural power, with its dorsal carved spine and the curious bath on the summit. 'Howe' is again linked to Hoeur (a howe is a burial house), whilst 'den' or 'dun' means a fortification. One of the Langdale End churches is built on part of a large patch of high flattened ground. Though it is a Wesleyan church, it has stood there since 1822, and the orientation of church to hill is similar to Blakey Topping's relationship with its own stone circle.

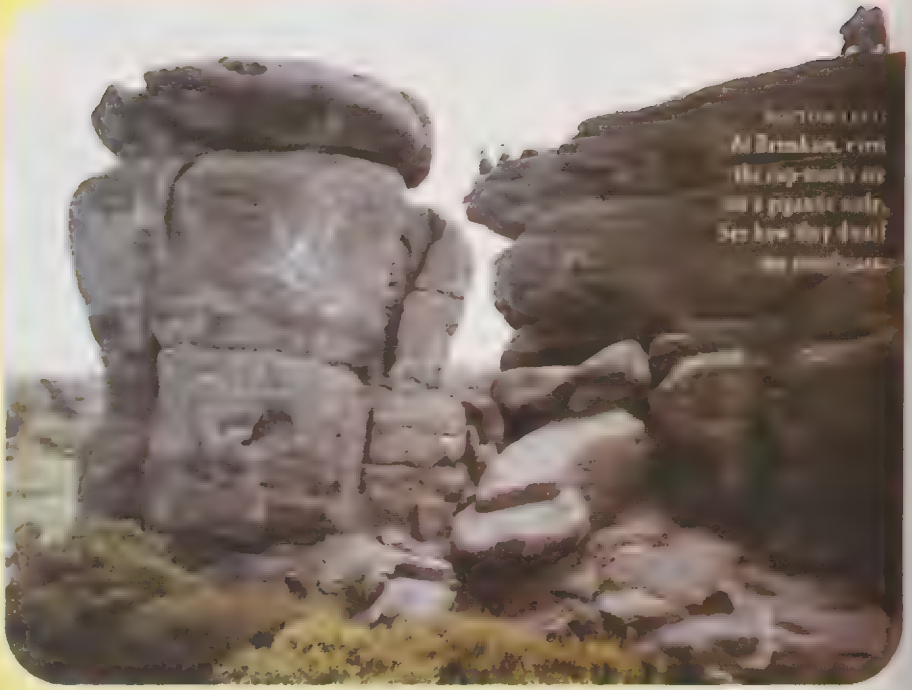
WINDY EXPOSED NOTES AT BLAKEY TOPPING: 29TH OCTOBER 1996 CE

What a worthwhile walk. In high gales that swept people to their deaths last night, I staggered in brilliant sunshine towards the sacred peak called Blakey Topping. Like Swinside and Sunkenkirk,^G like Gamelands^G and Knott Hill, this monument is a symbol of tiny Man caught in the thrall of the Mother yet still crying out 'Me!' I walked the long route from the south-east so that Hazelhead Moor took on a long torso-like Hartridge appearance… This is a wild dreamland and [it was] a lucky decision to come here…

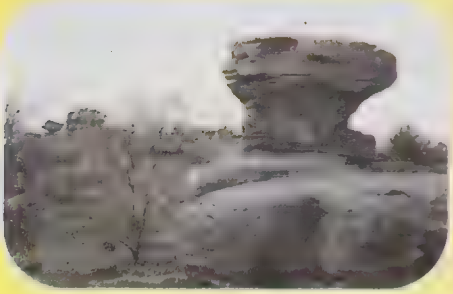
From Pickering, take the A169 to the Hole of Horcum (in most road atlases). Walk west along Old Wives' Way (signposted) to Blakeley Topping ahead. For Howden, travel to Langdale End in the North Riding Forest Park. The village is north off the A170 at West Ayton.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
99.210649

Brimham Rocks



Around Pateley Bridge in the Nidd Valley, travellers can get lost easily. The landmass to the west of Duck Street is a wilderness, especially in the mire between Stony Grooves and the Wig Stones Allotment. But to the east of the river Nidd is the sacred ground, here known as Brimham Moor. Approaching from the south, the moor rises up out of flat fertile plain like some natural citadel which draws the traveller in. Up on Hare Heads, the rare rocks of Brimham are the ultimate proto-Neolithic temple, with natural causeways of rock leading to extraordinary clifftops, balanced rocks heaved up on end and megalithic NASA-projectiles silhoutted against the stark sky. These sensational forms range across a wide sixty-acre area, and have taken on mysterious names like the Yoke of Oxen, the Devil's Anvil, the Druid's Altar, Druid's Coffin, the Pulpit, the Idol Stone, and the more approachable Cow, Rabbit, Lover's Rock and Druid's Writing Desk. This proto-Neolithic temple inspired the Ancients with its colossal forms. Like the Doubler Stones at Rombald's Moor,[G] the ability of these rocks to attract people of our time shows what terrific awe in which the Ancients would have beheld them. Our modern culture throws mystery TV shows at people all week long, yet somehow they are still drawn to the simple blunt reality of these places. As you address the 200-ton Hanging Rock which balances on its incredibly narrow point, consider the disbelief of ancient visitors at this stone and the heightened sense of awareness brought on by merely being a part of such a splendid mystery. In his book *A Guide to Ancient Britain*, Bill Anderton tells us that 'The occultist Madame Blavatsky saw the revolving rocking stones on the summits of some of the larger rocks as copies of the divinatory or oracular rocks used by the priests in lost Atlantis.' Let us finish with two legends of the Brimham Rocks. It is said that the Wishing Stone may be activated by placing a finger into the hole whilst making the wish. Another legend has it that the enormous Rocking Stone can only be moved by an honest man.



NOTES AT BRIMHAM ROCKS, NEAR PATELEY BRIDGE: 30TH APRIL 1998 CE

How astounding this strange massif is. It rises out of flat land, is seen from miles away, and delivers sculpture after sculpture of animal figures, fanciful characters and bizarre formations. Brimham is brimful of magic and is an incredible proto-Neolithic temple. The sheer size of this sacred landscape gives Brimham a chance to shine, and the many names which have been given to the various stones shows the continuing usage of this place by locals and other tourists. The stones are known as the Blacksmith, Turtle, Gorilla, Crown, Crocodile, Dancing Bear, Kissing Chair, Eagle, Flowerpot, Watchdog, Boat, Pivot and Cannon.

Brimham Rocks are to the east of Pateley Bridge, between the fork in the B6265 and the B6165. In most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
75.931437

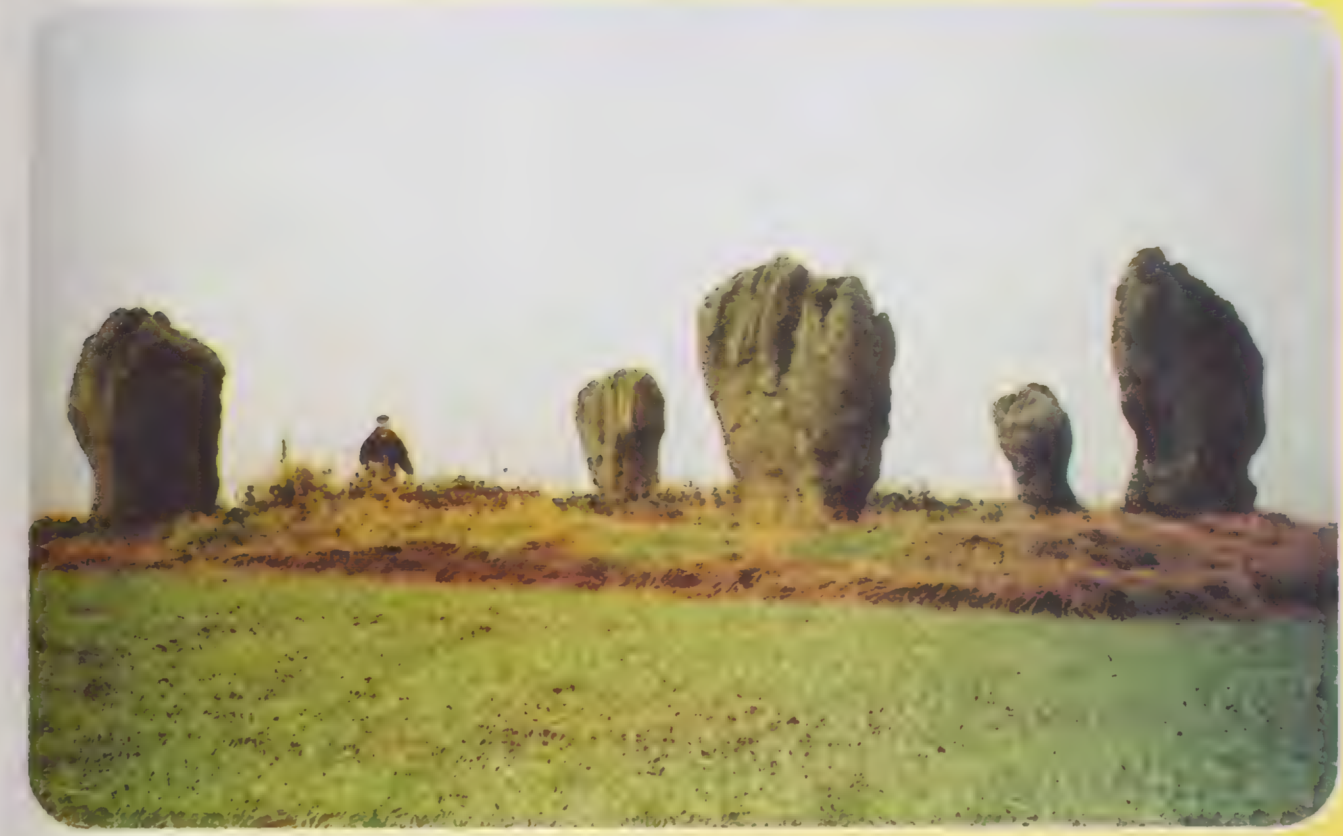
3 c) 3

Duddo Five Stones

This remarkable stone circle stands like megalithic darts hurled into a low knoll, situated on low ground overlooked by the gentle Mother eminence called Mattilees Hill a half mile to the east. We are here only two miles from the river Tweed which defines the line of the Scottish border. The wonderful shape of the stones was caused by the action of rain funnelling down this fairly porous sandstone upon its raised and isolated plinth. Like Duloe^{G} in Cornwall, this stone circle is a unique and fiercely individual site. The Five Stones are all very large, being between six and seven feet six inches tall, but they are also wide and stupendously grained and some crevices are deep enough to put a whole hand inside. The monument was known as the Four Stones until 1903, at which time the fifth stone was re-erected to further improve the superb silhouette which the circle presents upon the skyline. An excavation took place in 1890, but it was a messy work which discovered little. Two stoneholes were found at a gap in the west of the circle, but it is still unknown how many stones originally stood at Duddo. A burning pit had at one time been built in the centre of the circle, and filled with 'much charcoal and bone'.

Duddo

At Duddo, there stand five stones on a hill,
Removed from the day, as air living and still
Pushes over and round them, compressing their form –
They inwardly weather each storm.
No living thing utters at Duddo's sweet stones
Their tops are rain gutters – their bases are clones,
For each is the other and all make the whole –
Essentially, that is their Goal.



NOTES AT DUDDO FIVE STONES, NORTHUMBERLAND: 28TH NOVEMBER 1997 CE

The Duddo circle has the most enchanting position of all stone circles from the point of view of the arriving traveller. The stones stand out on the magical knoll as the entranced pilgrim cries out, 'Yes, oh yes!' This area is so full of faerie hillocks and tumps of seemingly infinite meaning that the visitor must treat this area at the end of the Cheviots with great caution. The Duddo stones are large and highly eroded beauties, their downward effects of millennia of rainwater creating megalithic sheaves of arrows like the Devil's Arrows many miles south of here.

Approach Duddo village from the south along the B6354. Just in the village, where the main road does a jarring right, turn left. Continue past Duddo farm and past a modern tree plantation at right. About 200 yards after the trees stop, park beside green seven-bar gate. Walk down this path – the circle will appear ahead of you.

3 c) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
101.881668

Duggleby Howe

The enormous round barrow known as Duggleby Howe stands in its beautifully quiet agricultural landscape, the level horizon all around suggesting the kind of position in which a henge would have been placed. Duggleby formed part of the great arc of Neolithic hill altars, its siblings at the east being the great mounds of Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill along the Gypsey Race,^{G} and the Callis Wold mound which was built over a huge mortuary house. Aubrey Burl has suggested that these monuments influenced the building of Silbury^{G} on the Marlborough Downs, whilst I suggest that Blakey Topping & Howden^{G} to Duggleby's north were the original inspiration for all of these mounds. Excavations in 1890 revealed that the mound was built above a rectangular rock-cut shaft ten feet deep. No burial was discovered, but a large double grave of ten bodies was found in a central pit-grave, along with a fine flint knife, stone arrowheads and bone pins. Later, fifty Beaker cremations were inserted into the mound alongside more bone pins and arrowheads. Though horribly ploughed down nowadays, Duggleby used to be surrounded by a deep ditch and high bank so large that the local B1253 now cuts right through it. And though, even with the centuries of ploughing, the mound still remains around twenty feet tall, it was once over thirty feet high. Farm cottages have been built close to the great barrow in the past few years, but settlement was always close by, as attested by the remains of the ancient Mowthorpe village, now a series of green walls and markings about 400 yards to the right of the cottages, and visible from the barrow.

NOTES ON DUGGLEBY HOWE: 28TH OCTOBER [12TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY] 1996 CE

Splash, splash, splash … unseen clouds are dropping rain on me on this … windy Duggleby Howe afternoon. The sun is blasting me from the west and my book got dripped upon, yet saved by my umbrella. Duggleby Howe is a remarkable place, an unchambered Maeshowe^{G} which has suffered at the hands of the agriculture which it was built to celebrate. Imagine the great Duggleby Howe surrounded by its great circular ring and ditch, the sacred whole swallowed by fields of ripening crops. Duggleby Howe was placed so cleverly that it gives the horizon a level view for all 360 [degrees] and the Silbury effect was clearly well-engineered and important. From all views, especially quite distant ones, Duggleby Howe stands proud of its surroundings, a regal agricultural monument.

Duggleby is on the B1253 between North Grimston and Sledmere. Visible from all around.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
101. SEE BELOW

3 c) 5

The Gypsey Race

As I left our guest house in Newton Stewart, lowland Scotland, on the morning of 3rd August 1993 CE, an old man who was also a guest overheard our conversation and asked me if I'd ever been to the Rudston Monolith. 'Not yet,' I replied, at which he went silent. The old man mysteriously told me that there was much more to be found than could be seen there, and that it all would be revealed should I just 'check out the Gypsey Race'. Because of our extreme schedule, it was over three years before I got to visit the Gypsey Race, but during that time I discovered that the old man had alerted me to a destroyed Neolithic ceremonial centre of incredible weight and mystery. A Bridlington bookseller told me that the river is called the Gypsey Race because 'it wanders about all over'. But while I like that explanation, it has an antiquarian lateness about it.

High on the Yorkshire Wolds, the Brigantes or 'people of Brig' worshipped their Great Goddess from before Neolithic times right down through the Iron Age into the Roman era. The complex of great stone and earth monuments built along the magical Gypsey Race on the Yorkshire Wolds was once a great Neolithic centre which stretched for miles. Now, due to the richness of the soil and the enthusiasm of farmers, most of that complex is no more than a ghost on the landscape, having been ploughed down and out over the last 200 years. Even guidebooks written as recently as 1960 send the visitor to sites which are, in 1997 CE, flattened and featureless in the crops. But a gentle visit to this place will slowly open the eyes of travellers and reveal a mystery land almost as exciting to visit as when the site was complete. For the views and positions are (or were) everything. There were once four long cursuses directed at or around the natural Rudston mound in the centre of Rudston village, and the essential starting point for any pilgrimage is the Rudston Monolith, the largest standing stone in Britain, now overlooked by a Norman church.

The Rudston Monolith

The twenty-five foot tall Rudston Monolith stands on a natural mound in the centre of the raised Norman churchyard in the centre of the village. This fabulous millstone grit monolith was hauled almost twelve miles from Cayton Bay south of Scarborough, though it is undecided whether this twenty-six ton monster was tooled at its resting place or before it made the journey. Just under two miles to the south stands the great Rudston Beacon, so anciently famous for its celebration of Bridgit's fires that the Romans sent their military road, the Woldgate, right across its summit. Further confirmation of Bridgit's presence is discovered at Breeze farm, sited directly between the beacon and the monolith. This land of the Brigantes had been ruled for countless centuries by a matrilinear succession until its end in 51 CE, as is explained more thoroughly in Chapter 4, 'The Bridgit Landscape.'

Willy Howe & Ba'l Hill

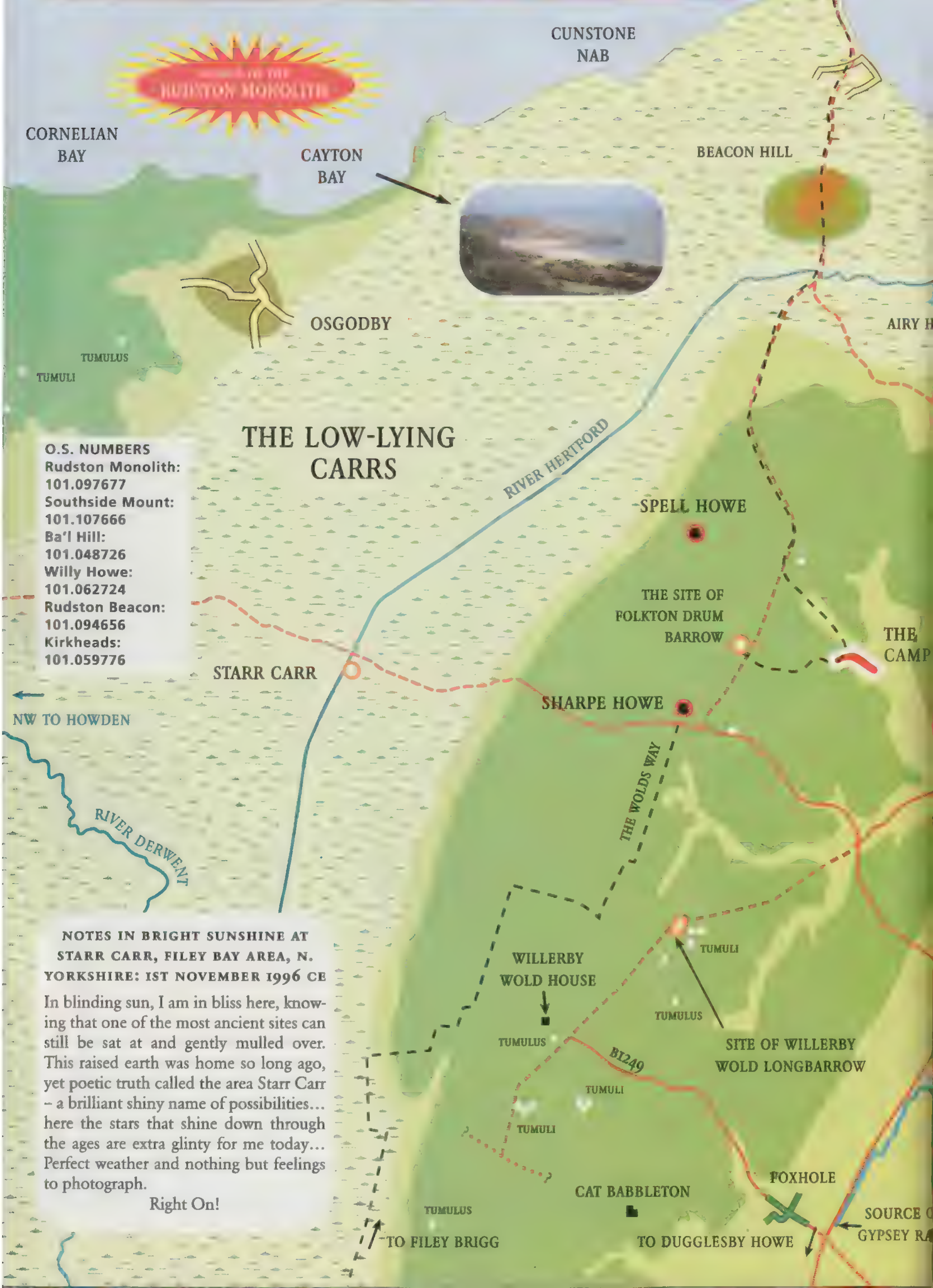
These Neolithic mounds are two of the largest discovered outside Wiltshire and it is for this reason that they have taken such rough treatment from the spades of antiquaries through the ages. Like Silbury,[G] both Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill have grabbed the antiquarian imagination from the very beginning, and fuelled legends and stories of the sites. Indeed, Aubrey Burl has suggested that the building of Ba'l Hill and Willy Howe caused the creation of Silbury. Willy Howe is a particular mess nowadays, its centre dug so deep as to appear like some exploded volcano. No burials have been discovered here, though a burial pit was found and a deep rock-cut shaft was discovered, like the one at Duggleby Howe.[G] Excavations at Ba'l Hill in 1893 showed that the mound builders had begun with a large wooden structure on which were placed several human bodies, along with a 'spirit collection' of flints and broken pottery. Clearly, the preparation for both sites had been of the utmost importance, for there was fertile earth, vegetables, flints and stone – all in all a very life-giving richness for this new mound. There are clear ancient sun connections at this site, for Baal was the sun.

Rudston Beacon

Unlike most sacred hills, the beacon is barely more raised up than its surroundings. But four clues enable us to divine this summit's former importance. First, the name clearly reveals Rudston Beacon as a former 'fire-hill'. Second, the Neolithic builders aligned a two mile long cursus on the hill. Third, the Romans attempted to diffuse its symbolic power by sending their main military road across its summit. And fourth and most impressive, the positioning of the Folkton Barrow at Kirkheads allows a dip in the southern horizon to just reveal Rudston Beacon exactly eight miles away.

RUDSTON MONOLITH & THE GYPSEY RACE

AN OVERVIEW OF A RECENTLY DESTROYED NEOLITHIC SACRED LANDSCAPE


FILEY
BRIG
RUDSTON MONOLITH
CUNSTONE NAB
CORNELIAN BAY
CAYTON BAY
BEACON HILL
OSGODBY
AIRY H
TUMULUS
TUMULI
THE LOW-LYING CARRS
RIVER HERTFORD
SPELL HOWE
THE SITE OF FOLKTON DRUM BARROW
THE CAMP
STARR CARR
SHARPE HOWE
NW TO HOWDEN
THE WOLDS WAY
RIVER DERWENT
TUMULI
WILLERBY WOLD HOUSE
TUMULUS
TUMULUS
SITE OF WILLERBY WOLD LONGBARROW
B1249
TUMULI
TUMULI
FOXHOLE
CAT BABBLETON
TUMULUS
SOURCE O
GYPSEY RA
TO FILEY BRIGG
TO DUGGLESBY HOWE

O.S. NUMBERS

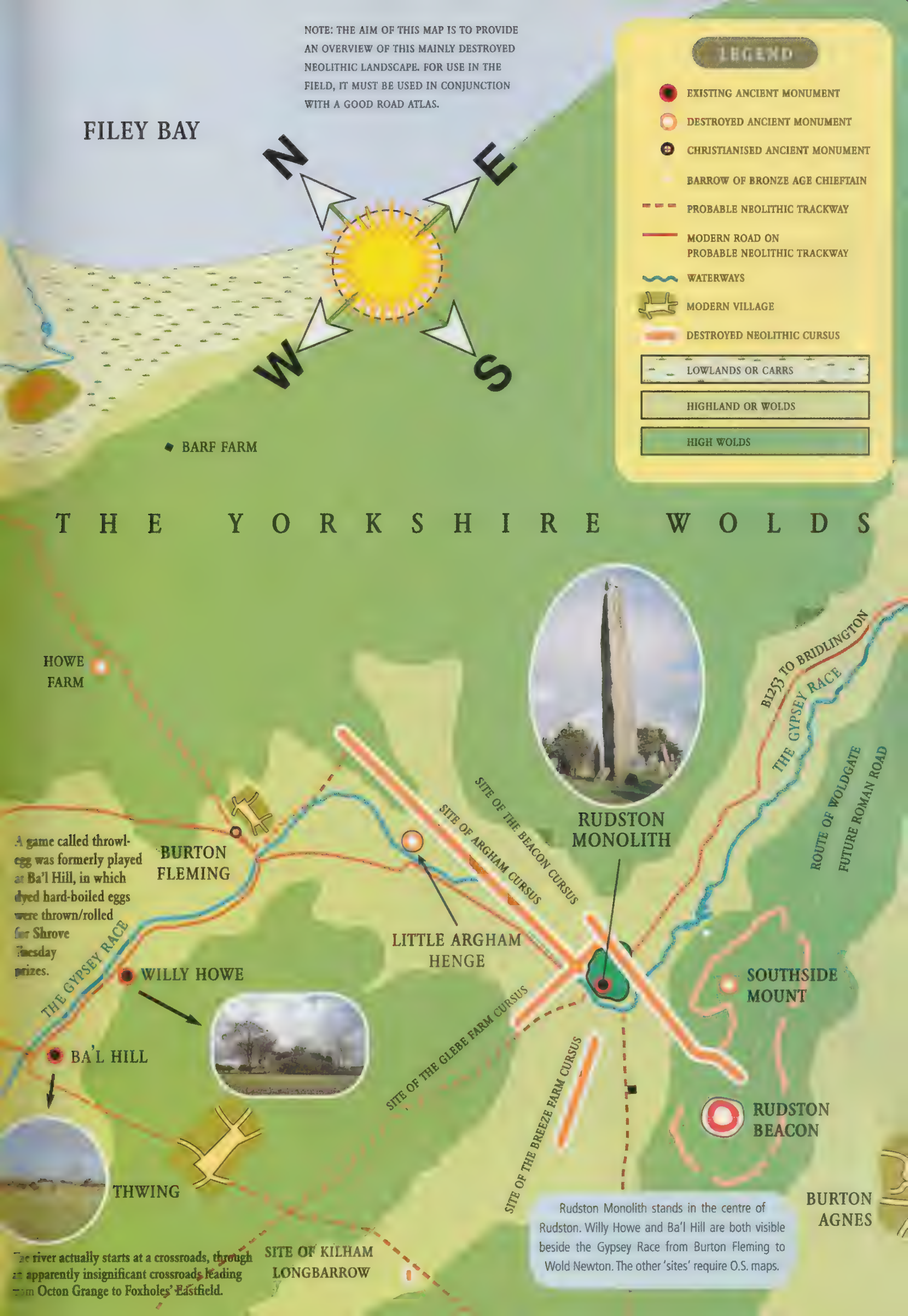
Rudston Monolith:	101.097677
Southside Mount:	101.107666
Ba'l Hill:	101.048726
Willy Howe:	101.062724
Rudston Beacon:	101.094656
Kirkheads:	101.059776

NOTES IN BRIGHT SUNSHINE AT STARR CARR, FILEY BAY AREA, N. YORKSHIRE: 1ST NOVEMBER 1996 CE

In blinding sun, I am in bliss here, knowing that one of the most ancient sites can still be sat at and gently mulled over. This raised earth was home so long ago, yet poetic truth called the area Starr Carr – a brilliant shiny name of possibilities… here the stars that shine down through the ages are extra glinty for me today… Perfect weather and nothing but feelings to photograph.

Right On!

NOTE: THE AIM OF THIS MAP IS TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THIS MAINLY DESTROYED NEOLITHIC LANDSCAPE. FOR USE IN THE FIELD, IT MUST BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A GOOD ROAD ATLAS.


FILEY BAY
N
E
W
S
LEGEND
● EXISTING ANCIENT MONUMENT
○ DESTROYED ANCIENT MONUMENT
⊕ CHRISTIANISED ANCIENT MONUMENT
BARROW OF BRONZE AGE CHIEFTAIN
PROBABLE NEOLITHIC TRACKWAY
MODERN ROAD ON PROBABLE NEOLITHIC TRACKWAY
WATERWAYS
MODERN VILLAGE
DESTROYED NEOLITHIC CURSUS
LOWLANDS OR CARRS
HIGHLAND OR WOLDS
HIGH WOLDS
BARF FARM
THE YORKSHIRE WOLDS
HOWE FARM
B1253 TO BRIDLINGTON
THE GYPSEY RACE
ROUTE OF WOLDGATE
FUTURE ROMAN ROAD
RUDSTON MONOLITH
SITE OF THE BEACON CURSUS
SITE OF ARGHAM CURSUS
BURTON FLEMING
LITTLE ARGHAM HENGE
THE GYPSEY RACE
WILLY HOWE
SOUTHSIDE MOUNT
BA'L HILL
SITE OF THE GLEBE FARM CURSUS
SITE OF THE BREEZE FARM CURSUS
RUDSTON BEACON
THWING
BURTON AGNES
SITE OF KILHAM LONGBARROW

A game called throwl-egg was formerly played at Ba'l Hill, in which dyed hard-boiled eggs were thrown/rolled for Shrove Tuesday prizes.

The river actually starts at a crossroads, through an apparently insignificant crossroads leading from Octon Grange to Foxholes' Eastfield.

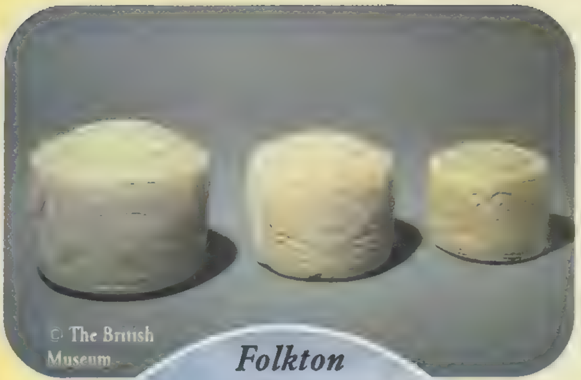
Rudston Monolith stands in the centre of Rudston. Willy Howe and Ba'l Hill are both visible beside the Gypsey Race from Burton Fleming to Wold Newton. The other 'sites' require O.S. maps.

Kirkheads

Though there is nothing to be seen on the ground anymore, the Folkton Barrow is worth a visit if only for the importance of its exquisite grave goods and the marvellous position of the former monument high on the tellingly-named Kirkheads. For the barrow overlooked a natural crossroads, the long north–south combe being known as Camp Dale, which leads to the Iron Age fort called the Camp. To the east stands the magical Filey Bay, whilst Sharpe Howe pricks the horizon just a half mile due west. The Folkton Barrow was built across two circular ditches, and it was between these that chalk drums were found, alongside the bones of a child and a bone pin. A huge mound of flints at the centre of the barrow covered a male and female Bronze Age burial. These people were subsequently reburied after the removal of both of their heads. The magnificent chalk drums are in the British Museum.

The Legend of Willy Howe

The 12th-century writer William of Newburgh recorded this folktale. One moonlit night, a Burton Fleming man was returning home along the riverbank of the Gypsey Race after a drunken night out in Wold Newton. He left the village inn and travelled south over the river bridge when he saw, on the south bank of the river, lights and music coming from Ba'l Hill, the ancient mount which stood along his path to Burton. Ignoring his fear in a drunken bravado, he galloped past Ba'l Hill and onwards towards his home. But presently, the man saw more lights ahead, spilling out of the great mount of Willy Howe, along with a good deal of music too. This time, he rode up to Willy Howe and looked inside. A great banquet was taking place. One of the attendants gave him a goblet full of something which he promptly poured away and galloped off into the night with the cup. Pursued by the feasters, the man reached Burton Fleming, where his enquiries established that the cup was made from an unknown material. The goblet was then presented to the king.



Folkton

1.
Folkton Kirk
A round mound
Outdoor unroofed temple.
2.
Folkton drums
The chalk sound
In the unroofed temple.
3.
Light the fire on Rudston Beacon
Call the Sharpe Howe people out to play
We are fetching stones to build great chambers,
We are going east to Filey Bay.

Southside Mount

A visit to this site is central to the Gypsey Race pilgrimage, but do not expect anything more than a great view, for the past century's ploughing has virtually obliterated this once upstanding monument. Though Southside Mount now appears as no more than a huge flattened ploughed-out barrow, this dramatically sited tumulus was once a stupendous construction with a nine foot tall barrow 100 feet across at its centre. Beyond this was a deep circular ditch, now silted up, and beyond that a great square ditch enclosing the whole, a ground plan which has a universal meaning extending to both the Mayans and modern Masons. The original landscape intentions of Southside Mount's builders can still be seen by walking the line of the Rudston Beacon Cursus, which runs from the north-east of the modern village to O.S. number 101.102679. Even in destruction, the mound draws the eye to its horizon vantage-point.

TOP: **The Folkton Drums (© The British Museum).**
CENTRE: **The path to Kirkheads.**
BOTTOM: **Willy Howe.**

NOTES IN THE GLOAMING AT RUDSTON: SUNDOWN, HALLOWEEN, 1ST NOVEMBER 1996 CE

I'm staring at the monolith from below the sacred hill altar. It is much easier to get a perspective without that huge church against my butt all the time. From here, the mound dwarfs the church, as it should. Rudston is an eerie place, built precariously on an ancient past of true psychedelic intensity. Each village along the Gypsey Race has some tale to tell, but here it all pitches in to form one awesome and unorthodox mystery. If Avebury^{G} is the Great Reconciler, then where are the cursuses? Rudston and its physical environment fit well with the Avebury complex: the chalk, the flint, the vast earth monuments, the disregard for time and perspective, all caught up in these enormous civic monuments. This week has been a divine investigation. But now it's too dark to write, so I must leave…

Lud's Church & the Bridestones

Lud's Church.

A fault in the rock created Lud's Church, probably through a landslip which opened a fault in the rock's structure. The chasm is about nine feet wide and fifty feet deep, descending into the gloom on special stone steps which take the visitor almost seventy paces into the hillside. This proto-chapel of natural rock stands on the edge of the steep valley of the Black Brook above its confluence with the river Dane, near Longton on the Staffordshire–Cheshire border. It is a deep and rocky cleft in the strata of the Mother, situated in Forest Wood on the slippery slopes of the Back Forest, a beautiful and quiet part of the Dane Valley. Until a few years ago, a strange idol could be seen on the rocks high above the reach of visitors. It was a white wooden figurehead known to locals as Lady Lud. Unfortunately, she has been smashed by vandals unknown and her pieces scattered. There have been few studies of Lud's Church, but this natural temple was featured prominently in the book *Megaliths*, a wonderful photographical study by the Californian Paul Caponigro.

To the east of low-lying Congleton in Cheshire, a great hill known as the Cloud rises up in the lazy five-mile crescent made by the river Dane. Below stands the burial chamber known as the Bridestones, or stones of Bride, an enormous chamber and wrecked megalithic forecourt situated in the grounds of a dairy farm. The purportedly gigantic mound has all gone from the Bridestones but was originally around thirty feet wide by 300 long. There were also three chambers here, but two were used for building material in the 18th century. No details of finds have been recorded, but the remaining stones are huge, and the Bridestones' sense of place is quite dramatic, even if the guard-dogs do bark incessantly...

NOTES AT LUD'S CHURCH, STAFFORDSHIRE BORDER: 2ND MAY 1998 CE

This enormous cleft in the rock has set itself up as the perfect proto-Neolithic temple. Later generations shaped the steps and named this place after Lewd Lud, but its present post-flood state* suggests more of a gash of the Goddess than a shrine to the priapic Lug. Still, this is a place of Scando-Germanic interest and Lugh's Hill [Lose Hill] is not far away. But Lud's Church is huge, and deep, though narrow and tight as can be. High up in the exquisite Peak [it] is as perfect a day as I could see.

These sites require an O.S. map.

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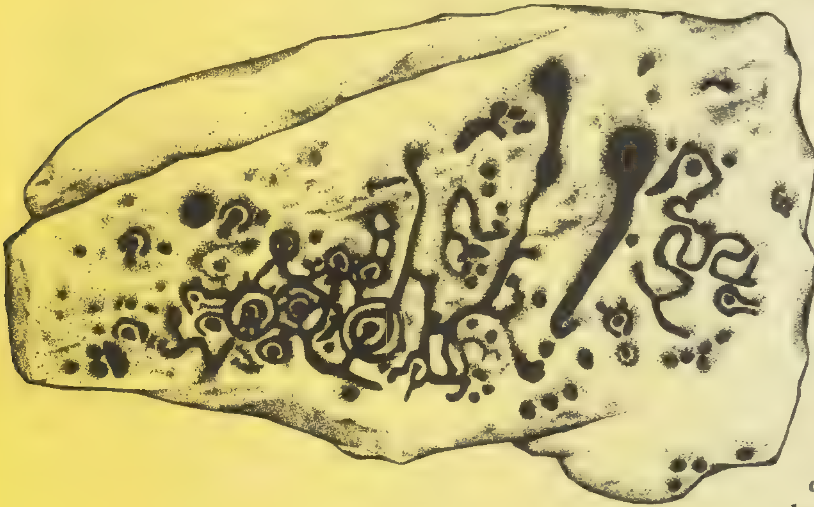
* Half of the Midlands was underwater after famous torrential rain.

Rombald's Moor

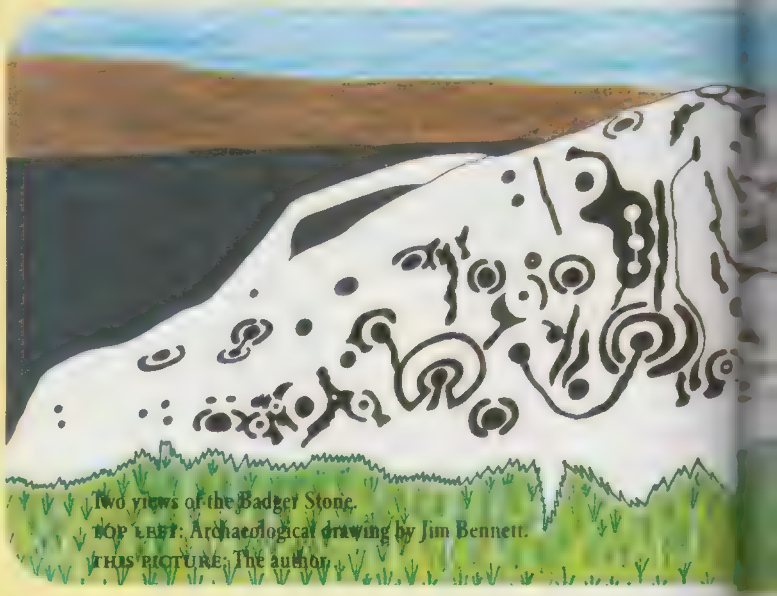
The glorious massif of Rombald's Moor is a great elevated spur of the eastern Pennines defined on either side by the valleys of the rivers Wharfe in the north and Aire in the south. Just a few miles north-west of the heart of Yorkshire's main conurbation, this grand moor is, nevertheless, a removed thing still filled with endless miles of carved rocks, standing stones and proto-Neolithic temples. The moor would be a decade of delightful walking for any locals with the time, whilst visitors to the area can only wring their hands in frustration at the sheer weight of prehistory strewn around in front of them. The geology of the moor changes depending on the visitor's position, but our area as defined by this book will take in all the northern areas of Ilkley Moor, Addingham High Moor and Burley Moor, where the rock is predominantly formed of variable sandstone and beds of shale. This easily carved rock presents travellers with a series of intriguingly individual and enlightening monuments far removed from the buzz of the urban valleys below.



The hunched and huddled Badger Stone stands on the flat high ground a few hundred yards from the steep slopes overlooking White Wells behind Ilkley town. This natural outcrop of coarse grit rock stands close to many other carved rocks and is situated on the eastern path from the top of Spicey Gill and Grainings Head. The Badger Stone has the silhouette of a recumbent animal and features complicated carvings which cover its south-westerly face with cups and rings all linked by deep grooves. The proto-Neolithic temple of two natural stone tables called the Doubler Stones stands high on the jagged edge of the far western side of Rombald's Moor overlooking Silsden and the wide Airedale Valley. The western Doubler is the more decorated, with carvings of several cups and lines, together with some deep basins. Above the Cow & Calf Hotel overlooking the Wharfe Valley is the Pancake Rock, a superb and huge anthropomorphic balancing rock, standing proud of its outcrop like some prehistoric rock idol, and there are still fifty-four cup-marks to be seen here, alongside six carved rings. The Idol Stone stands close to the south of the Pancake Rock on the edge of the path running across the remarkable and mystifying Green Crag Slack. It is a smooth flat rock of the local gritstone featuring twenty-five cup-marks. The Swastika Stone is generally considered to have been an Iron Age carving and therefore outside the parameters of this book, but that is hardly the attitude which should be shown to such a bizarre beauty and the Swastika Stone must be treated with extreme respect. The stone stands on an outcrop of rock on the edge of Woodhouse Crag near the path, and has four loose waving arms, each carved at its centre with a cup-mark. The Italian writer Anati referred to the design as a 'Celtic Rose' and has compared the rock with a similar example at Carpene di Sellero in Italy.

THE BADGER STONE: 104.111461
THE DOUBLER STONES: 104.073465
PANCAKE ROCK: 104.134463
THE IDOL STONE: 104.133460
THE SWASTIKA STONE: 104.095469

Rombald's Moor requires an O.S. map.

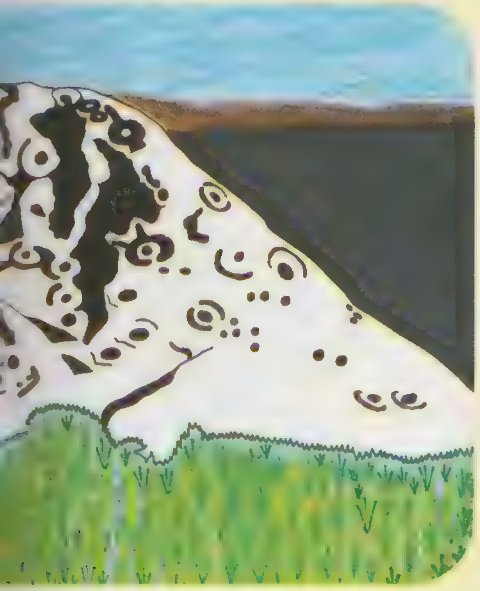


Two views of the Badger Stone.
TOP LEFT: Archaeological drawing by Jim Bennett.
THIS PICTURE: The author.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
104. SEE BELOW

NOTES AT THE BADGER STONE ON ILKLEY MOOR, YORKSHIRE: 1ST MAY 1998 CE

Approaching the Badger Stone was in itself a headtrip. The carvings on this stone have intrigued me for years ... Jim Bennett's illustration [see left] is perfect for revealing the intention behind the eroded canvas, but today the drab olive day is raining an olive light onto the stone and it seems unfathomably unreal and otherworldly. To the north, the white RAF radar balls are the only things visible on the horizon [I consiously kept them out of my illustration], but the two vile TV masts away to my south, at Whetstone Gate, may actually be used ... in navigation towards this here Badger Stone.

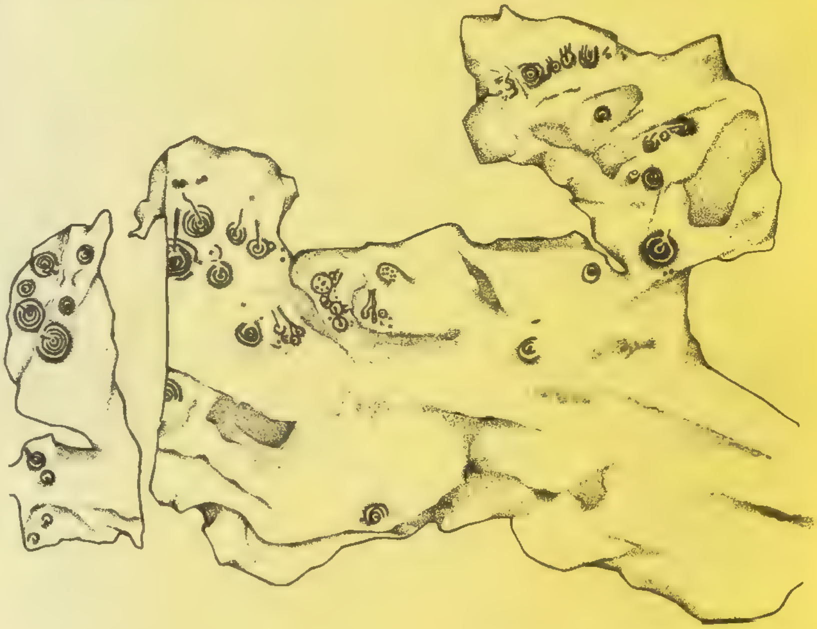


ORDNANCE SURVEY
75.984367

3 c) 8

Roughting Linn

This huge and spectacular outcrop of natural sandstone rock on Goatscrag Hill is carved with deep wide cups and rings, grooves and delicate grooved flower stems. It stands unsignposted and invisible from the road amidst deep lush gorse and spectacular silver birch, right at the end of the great north–south orientated mountain range known as the Cheviot Hills. Here are the remains of distant prehistory, though many of the formerly upstanding monuments – henges, standing stones and circles – are now returned to the soil. But the sandstone outcrop of Roughting Linn is one of the largest prehistoric carvings in Britain. A huge area of the stone is carved with over sixty designs, filling a space around sixty feet by forty feet of sloping and multi-faceted sandstone. This is quite unlike the sheer canvas-flat two dimensions of the carved stones of Kilmartin Valley, such as Achnabreck[G] and Baluachraig.[G] Remember to also investigate the camp at Roughting Linn – this is a promontory fort just south-west of the waterfall. The undefended level ground of the approach was heavily defended with three banks and three ditches plus a counterscarp.



NOTES AT ROUGHTING LINN, NORTHUMBRIA, IN RAIN: 28TH NOVEMBER 1997 CE

What a providential meeting! I arrived at sundown as the mists were swirling and a man called Michael Hickman offered to show me around this complex complex. The great block of stone for which Roughting Linn is so famous is a stark living thing with carvings of spirals all across it and a foothill similar to that at Dunadd in Argyllshire. The stone stands within an undefined Iron Age fort, but Michael showed me the waterfall which stands intriguing and secluded on the other side of the farm path. Here, rock shelters and the peace of the falling water evoke a time of Humanity at its very beginning.

Roughting Linn requires an O.S. map.

Ure–Swale Plateau

In North Yorkshire between the small cathedral city of Ripon and the town of Northallerton stands a great plateau of sacred land orientated north-west to south-east between the rivers Ure and Swale. These rivers both originate in the north-west and travel their serpentine routes parallel but four to seven miles apart until they finally join at a confluence just south of Boroughbridge. This Ure–Swale Plateau is really a series of moors and carrs, but they combined to provide the Ancients with an easily definable and huge sacred area. This is the Land of the Great Goddess Ur, and it is to this Goddess that both rivers were originally dedicated. The most pleasing monuments on this 'Ur-Swirl' Plateau are the legendary Devil's Arrows, an alignment of three of the largest standing stones in Britain, and a great line of four great henges, all of which stood around 100 yards in diameter. One of these is now destroyed on the farm at Nunwick. The only reason to visit this site is to get a sense of its former place, but up at Thornborough the line of three henges is still powerful and easy to visit, close to the banks of the south-running river Ure. The importance of this Ure–Swale Plateau is most clearly revealed in the way that the Romans later subdued this holy area with the building of their horrendous Dere Street military road. It bisects the landscape in much the same way that the Ackling Dyke bisects Cranbourne Chase. This huge linear earthwork would have psychologically ruined the unity of the sacred landscape, and the vile and claustrophobic situation in which the Devil's Arrows have now found themselves is a natural conclusion to the process the Romans began 2,000 years ago.

Thornborough Henges

Each of the henges at the Thornborough site is in a varying stage of destruction, but a visit to all three gives a general sense of their original stature as well as providing a sense of place at these monuments. The central henge is the easiest to begin with, for it is easy to reach and still stands with banks to a height of around six feet, though its original height would have been closer to ten. Brambles, long grasses and all kinds of vegetation impede the visitor, but have also helped to preserve this ring, which is the only unploughed area of this agricultural region. These monuments were magnificent constructions, with both inner and outer banks up to ten feet deep and over twenty yards across. Their large central area was big enough to have held at least 2,000 people, yet they are here three in a line, suggesting use by a great many more. Curiously, a refinement employed in these sites was not found in other henges – a wide flat area, or berm, was left between the high bank and the inner ditch, allowing for a much wider outer observational platform. This becomes even clearer when visiting the northern tree-covered henge which stands just by the local road a half mile to the north-west. Though disorientating at first, the trees upon the north henge have clearly helped its survival, and a visit is a remarkable experience. The banks and ditches are still huge and the central berm is still so big as to confuse travellers in this otherwise normal circular wood. Unfortunately, a gravel pit stands due west about 400 yards. The constant reversing 'beeps' of heavy trucks and earth-movers is annoying, and a Sunday visit is preferable if possible. The most southerly henge stands in farmland and is the most battered of the three. Yet, despite this, it is still a powerful monument and a great pleasure to visit. Probably the greatest power of these particular henges is their ability to retain their general shape and dignity even in near destruction.

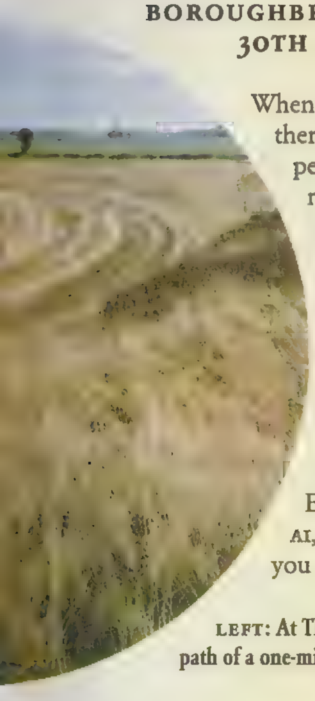
ORDNANCE SURVEY
99. SEE BELOW

The Devil's Arrows

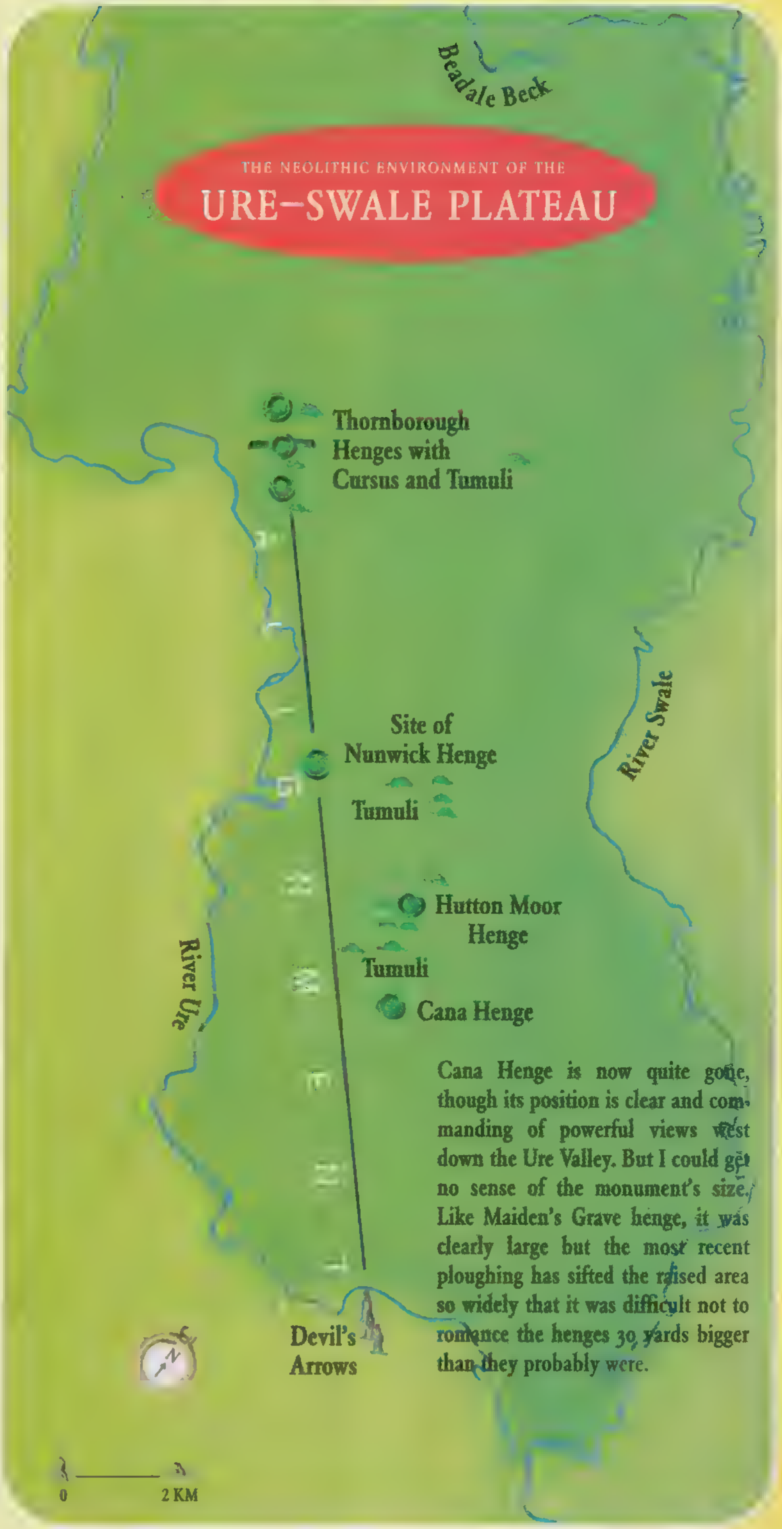
Standing on the southern shore of the river Ure close to Boroughbridge, legend has it that the Devil hurled these three mighty longstones in an effort to destroy the town. He missed and left a long alignment of these heavily rooted stones, the smallest being around eighteen feet tall, the longest over twenty-two. It is the weathering which has created the sheaf-of-arrows-like effect on these millstone grit giants. Water collecting at the top of the stones has created striations which really do have the effect of megalithc arrows, and a similar effect can be seen on the Queen Stone in Herefordshire. There are no other great stones in this part of the world and the many henges in the area show no proof at all of former stone circles having ever stood within their centres. The material of choice was clearly timber, and Aubrey Burl has suggested that the three stones were heavily tooled before erection by workers who were used to dealing exclusively with timber. There are said to have once been at least five Devil's Arrows. One is known to have been used for a bridge across a local stream, but the whereabouts of the other is quite unknown. In *From Carnac to Callanish*, Burl suggested that the stones must have come from the south at least nine miles away, near the 'weather-loosened slabs and laminated outcrops at Plumpton Rocks near Knaresborough'. This was done in order to avoid dragging these thirty-ton beauties across the roaring river Ure. William Stukeley noted that an annual fair was held at the Devil's Arrows on Midsummer's Day, perhaps a continued memory of an original prehistoric event.

NOISE, SORRY, NOTES FROM THE DEVIL'S ARROWS, BOROUGHBRIDGE: SUNDOWN, 30TH OCTOBER 1996 CE

When Stukeley saw this place, there was not even a whisper. NOW, it's constant racket with aerobatics going on overhead, and all the traffic. Who do I blame? The Romans. They stuck the A1 there, bisecting the sacred land, trashing our prehistoric heritage, and making us forget that the land between the Swale and the Ure was always so glorious, so sacred. Now, it doesn't matter. Even if all the trucks in the world use the A1, once you recognise where we once were, you can never go back.



LEFT: At Thornborough, this central henge was built across the path of a one-mile Neolithic cursus, or embanked ritual pathway.



Cana Henge is now quite gone, though its position is clear and commanding of powerful views west down the Ure Valley. But I could get no sense of the monument's size. Like Maiden's Grave henge, it was clearly large but the most recent ploughing has sifted the raised area so widely that it was difficult not to romance the henges 30 yards bigger than they probably were.

THE DEVIL'S ARROWS: 99.391665
THORNBOROUGH HENGE NORTH: 99.281801
THORNBOROUGH HENGE CENTRAL: 99.285795
THORNBOROUGH HENGE SOUTH: 99.289788
HUTTON MOOR HENGE: 99.353735
NUNWICK HENGE (SITE): 99.323748

These sites require an O.S. map. The Devil's Arrows are still confusing to me and I've visited relatively often.

3 c) 9

ORDNANCE SURVEY
104.126452

The Twelve Apostles of Ilkley Moor

Ilkley Moor is a special place of very sustained megalithic magic. This huge and removed landscape at over 1,250 feet in altitude presents a stupifyingly wide variety of megalithic worship, whilst the north-east of the moor is ridiculously used for military training. But high above this ritual violence stands the wonderful stone circle known as the Twelve Apostles. The archaeologist Arthur Raistrick discovered that this circle began as a monument of around twenty uprights of the local millstone grit, not large but rugged and obtrusive and about fifteen paces in diameter. The stones stood in a small rubbly bank around a central mound with a kist burial at its heart. Nowadays, there are Twelve Apostles standing, none larger than four feet tall, but the circle is a fine monument in a grand situation. In the 19th century, the circle was known as the Druidical Dial and was believed to have been a calendar of sorts. The Twelve Apostles form a perfect isosceles triangle with two other stone circles, the Backstones and the Grubstones. These circles are both exactly 1,180 yards away from the Twelve Apostles. In recent years, the stone circle has again become a focal point for celebrations of the summer solstice and the tradition grows annually stronger. Light phenomena have been witnessed over the Twelve Apostles and some people claim to have received shocks from the stones. In 1976, three members of the Royal Observer Corps witnessed a strange white sphere of light hovering directly over the circle. Walkers and serious researchers alike have seen curious phenomena over the Twelve Apostles and dozens of cases were reported up to 1986. Flashing lights, dropping balls of light, light clusters and lightballs have all been regularly reported, according to Paul Devereux's book *Places of Power*. This book was his journal of the researches of the Dragon Project, an Earth Mysteries group which spent considerable time at the stone circle. Those same balls of light were again witnessed over the Twelve Apostles in the early 1990s.

This photograph was taken by my friends Simon and Isobel, who both appear on page 381 in my photograph of Auchquhorthies.[C]

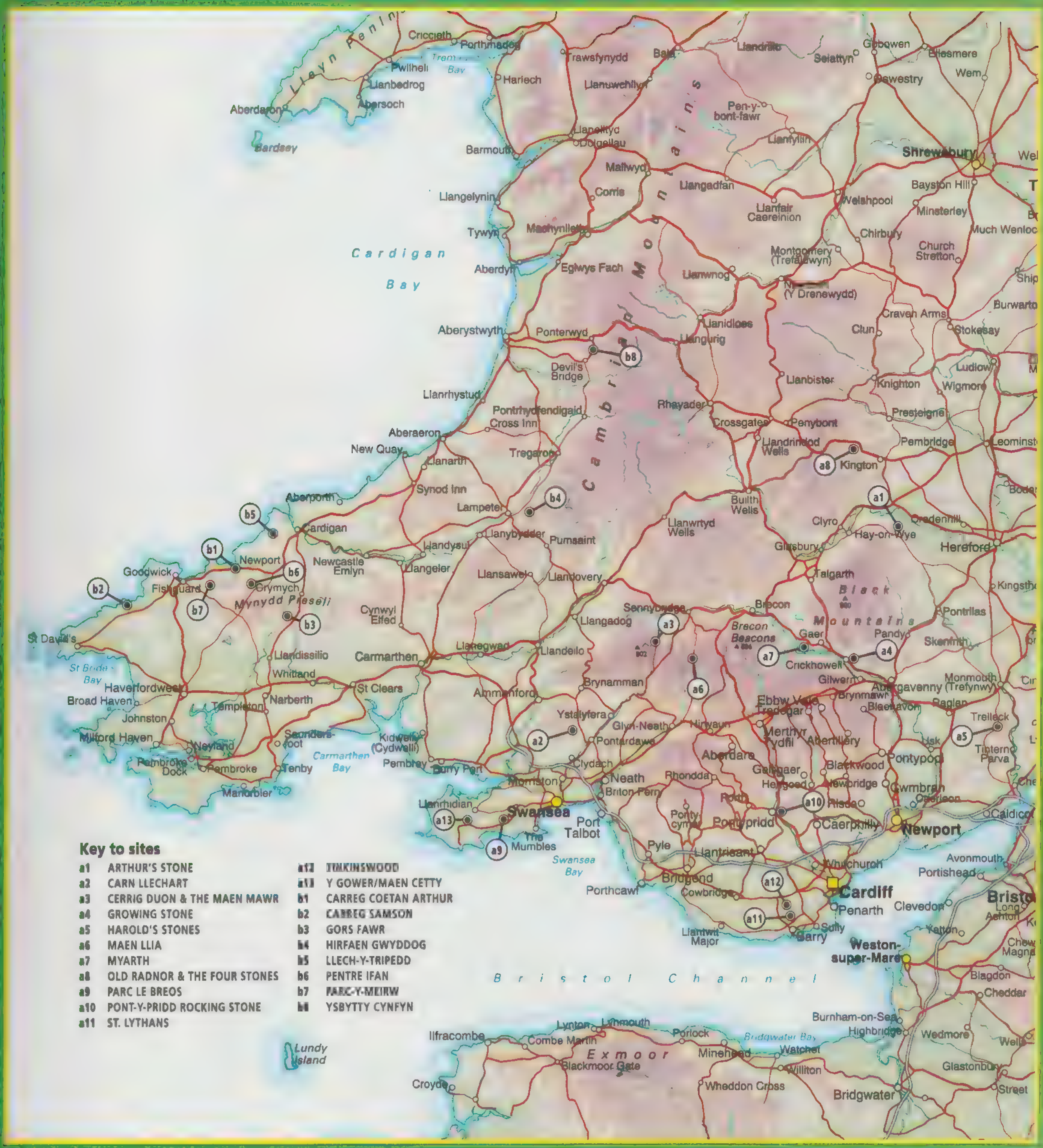
TWELVE APOSTLES NOTES ON ILKLEY MOOR, YORKSHIRE: 30TH APRIL 1998 CE

Such a perfect stone circle as the Twelve Apostles seems a real oddity on Rombald's Moor.[G] Striding across the springy vastness, it somehow appears like a bonus to have a stone circle of such distinction [here]. Like the Druid's Circle[G] on Penmaen Mawr, these Twelve Apostles are utterly dependent on the weather for their atmosphere. Today, the moor is very windy but not cold, yet I'm feeling the enormous sense of isolation which this moor puts into the visitor. I'm feeling small and thoughtful ... and cold.

The Twelve Apostles require an O.S. map.

four

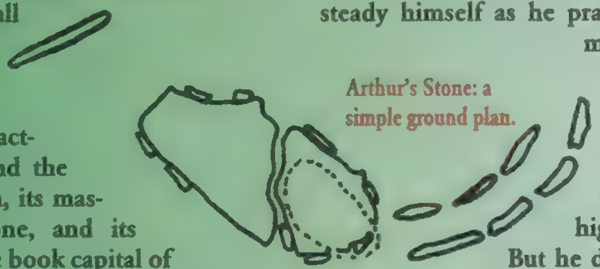
South & West Wales

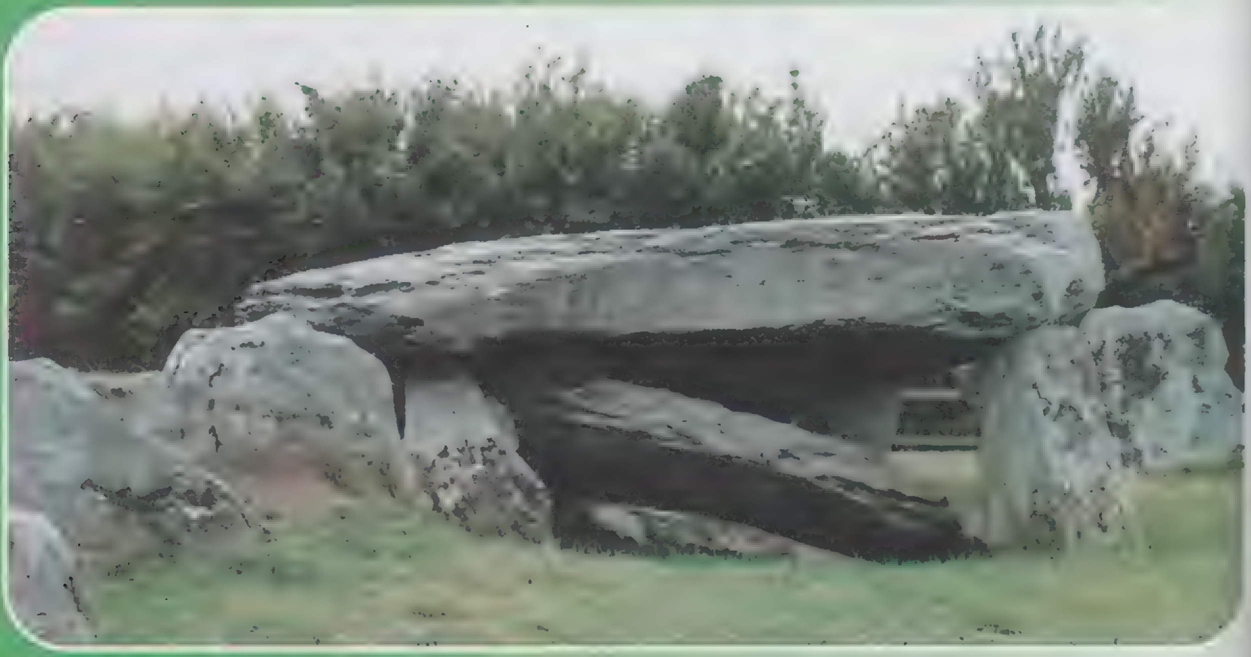

Key to sites
a1 ARTHUR'S STONE
a2 CARN LLECHART
a3 CERRIG DUON & THE MAEN MAWR
a4 GROWING STONE
a5 HAROLD'S STONES
a6 MAEN LLIA
a7 MYARTH
a8 OLD RADNOR & THE FOUR STONES
a9 PARC LE BREOS
a10 PONT-Y-PRIDD ROCKING STONE
a11 ST. LYTHANS
a12 TINKINSWOOD
a13 Y GOWER/MAEN CETTY
b1 CARREG COETAN ARTHUR
b2 CARREG SAMSON
b3 GORS FAWR
b4 HIRFAEN GWYDDOG
b5 LLECH-Y-TRIPEDD
b6 PENTRE IFAN
b7 PARC-Y-MEIRW
b8 YSBYTTY CYNFYN
Lleyn Peninsula
Criccieth
Porthmadog
Tremadog Bay
Pwllheli
Llanbedrog
Abersoch
Aberdaron
Bardsey
Harlech
Trawsfynydd
Bala
Llanuwchllyn
Barmouth
Dolgellau
Mallwyd
Corris
Llangelynin
Tywyn
Machynlleth
Aberdyfi
Eglwys Fach
Cardigan Bay
Aberystwyth
Ponterwyd
Devil's Bridge
Llanrhystud
Pontrhydfendigaid
Aberaeron
New Quay
Tregaron
Llanarth
Synod Inn
Lampeter
Aberporth
Cardigan
Newport
Newcastle Emlyn
Llandysul
Llanybydder
Pumsaint
Goodwick
Fishguard
Crymych
Mynydd Preseli
Llangeler
Llansawel
Llandovery
Cynwyl Elfed
St David's
St Brides Bay
Llandissilio
Whitland
Carmarthen
Llanegwad
Llandeilo
Llangadog
Haverfordwest
Broad Haven
Johnston
Templeton
Narberth
St Clears
Ammanford
Brynamman
Milford Haven
Neyland
Pembroke Dock
Pembroke
Saundersfoot
Tenby
Manorbier
Carmarthen Bay
Kidwelly (Cydweli)
Pembrey
Burry Port
Llanrhidian
Swansea
The Mumbles
Swansea Bay
Port Talbot
Morriston
Clydach
Pontardawe
Ystalyfera
Glyn-Neath
Neath
Briton Ferry
Porthcawl
Pyle
Bridgend
Cowbridge
Llantwit Major
Llantrisant
Pontypridd
Porth
Rhondda
Aberdare
Hirwaun
Merthyr Tydfil
Ebbw Vale
Tredegar
Abertillery
Gelligaer
Hengoed
Blackwood
Newbridge
Risca
Caerphilly
Whitchurch
Cardiff
Penarth
Sully
Barry
Newport
Cwmbran
Caerleon
Pontypool
Usk
Brynmawr
Blaenavon
Abergavenny
Crickhowell
Gilwern
Brecon
Brecon Beacons
Sennybridge
Black Mountains
Talgarth
Glasbury
Hay-on-Wye
Clyro
Builth Wells
Llanwrtyd Wells
Rhayader
Crossgates
Llandrindod Wells
Penybont
Llanbister
Llanidloes
Llangurig
Llanwnog
Cambrian Mountains
Llangadfan
Llanfair Caereinion
Llanfyllin
Pen-y-bont-fawr
Llandrillo
Selattyn
Gobowen
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Wem
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Minsterley
Welshpool
Chirbury
Montgomery (Trefaldwyn)
(Y Drenewydd)
Church Stretton
Much Wenlock
Craven Arms
Clun
Stokesay
Ludlow
Knighton
Wigmore
Presteigne
Pembridge
Leominster
Kington
Eardisley
Hereford
Kingsthorne
Pontrilas
Pandy
Skenfrith
Monmouth (Trefynwy)
Raglan
Trelleck
Tintern Parva
Caldicot
Avonmouth
Portishead
Clevedon
Bristol
Long Ashton
Yatton
Weston-super-Mare
Blagdon
Cheddar
Bristol Channel
Burnham-on-Sea
Highbridge
Wedmore
Wells
Glastonbury
Street
Bridgwater
Bridgwater Bay
Watchet
Williton
Minehead
Porlock
Lynton
Lynmouth
Combe Martin
Exmoor
Blackmoor Gate
Wheddon Cross
Ilfracombe
Croyde
Lundy Island

ORDNANCE SURVEY
161.318431

Arthur's Stone

Near the village of Dorstone, on Merbach Hill, overlooking the Dore Valley, stands the long low impressive dolmen called Arthur's Stone, occasionally known as the Quoit Stone. Though all ancient stones are known as Arthur's Stone hereabouts, it is clear that this is the most famous of all, attracting attention from all around the world because of its position, its massive twenty-five ton capstone, and its proximity to Hay-on-Wye, the book capital of the world. Chris Barber has noted that an unexplainable type of ancient mortar is still to be found 'in a small crevice on the west side of the south end of the huge capstone'. Geological analysis in May 1957 found the cement to contain large amounts of coal dust. Legend has it that the cup-marks found in a nearby rock were made as Arthur put his elbows upon them to steady himself as he prayed. Strange modern phenomena have been reported by Paul Devereux, who wrote in his *Places of Power*: 'After a severe thunderstorm one evening in 1978, villagers could hear a peculiar faint high pitched buzzing sound.' But he does not mention that the village is quite far from the monument, or that the village itself is a disparate group of dwellings. For villagers to have heard this ringing, the noise at the stones would have been tremendous.


Arthur's Stone: a simple ground plan.



NOTES WITH FREEZING HANDS FROM INSIDE THE CHAMBER AT ARTHUR'S STONE, NEAR HAY-ON-WYE: 29TH SEPTEMBER 1991 CE, 11 A.M.

Whoa. My ancient psyche is a ragged and raging mess. Sitting under the two capstones at this here ancient tomb, the wind whistling and the drizzle buffeting my feet and hands, my pen has almost dried up, but this place is magnificent. Arthur's Stone is wildly off the beaten track and ... is much ruined but there is enough evidence to suggest that this was a wild and important tomb. Though the road runs behind it, cutting into the mound, its likely entrance would have been from the south down in the valley, the tomb having presented a special and impressive sight throughout the climb... After climbing right inside to check the points where the capstones are supported, I feel that the capstones were probably one piece originally; there is also a strange and enormous flat stone underneath the main capstone, which seems to block the now exposed western entrance. Both of the capstones are supported by small uprights that have fused together with the main stones. The ceilings (undersides of the capstones) are brittle and must be touched delicately as they are now very flaky. Arthur's Stone is wonderful, a fine place to hang out, meditate and picnic – exposed to the elements but devoid of people.

Take the minor road from Bredwardine to Dorstone. Take the first right turn. Arthur's Stone is ahead beside the road. In many road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
160.698063

4 a) 2

Carn Llechart

She received a flower

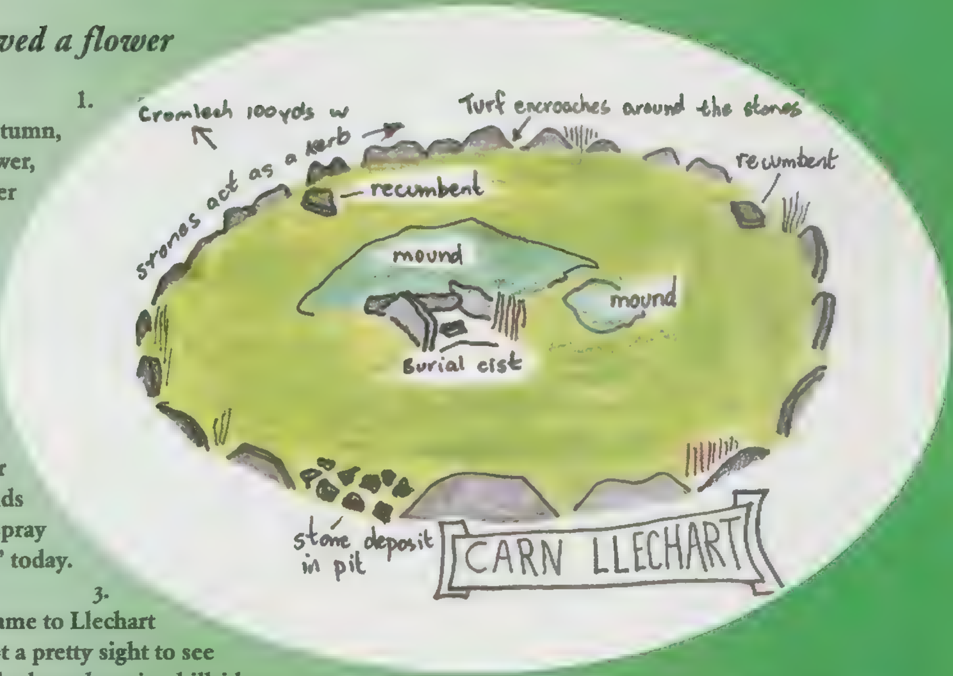
1\.
Wilting gently in the autumn,
Blown from winds upon the Gower,
Carn Llechart in the winter
Is a megalithic flower,
As the icy blasts do chill them
All her children ring the stones,
For Carn Llechart in the spring
Will bring the sonorest of tones.

2\.
Bud the sweet delicious flower
Chase the stars at
magic's midnight hour
And then in dewponds
Catch the fairy spray
For we'll be Joni Mitchellin' today.

3\.
Then summer came to Llechart
Not a pretty sight to see
On the bare decaying hillside
No you, no wind, just me
For drought had come to Llechart
And the stone flower dues
Were petrified & numb
Till the
conversion of the Jews.

4\.
But she received a flower
From her children on the hill
On that day
that the winds stood still.

5\.
They always knew what they had
Before it was gone,
They worked out in lightfields of cascading love,
Haloes of light created shadows when they walked in the dark,
They were moved with divinity's genius –
And not from above.



'… a circle of rude stones, which are somewhat of a flat form … disorderly pitch'd in the ground, of about 17 or 18 yards diameter; the highest of which now standing is not above a yard in height. It has but one entry into it, which is about four foot wide.'

WILLIAM CAMDEN'S BRITANNICA
(1695 ED.)

Standing high on the hillside of Mynydd Carn Llechart, the stone circle which gave the area its name blooms like a great megalithic flower. To the west about 100 yards down the steep slope are the remains of a burial chamber, a large capstone with a construction which employed the slope of the hillside itself. On the opposite hillside, the farmer has constructed his own stone enclosure, and all the stones are set far apart and are charmingly beguiling. Certain Welsh and Cornish circles, such as Moel ty Uchaf,[illegible] Stannon[illegible] and [illegible] share the same kind of diminutive stones as Carn Llechart, whilst the Cockpit, overlooking Ullswater in Cumbria, bears more than a passing resemblance. In his [illegible] of Cornwall, William Borlase used Carn Llechart as an example in his chapter on stone circles. He wrote: 'A Cromlech (or Altar-tomb of rough Stones) distinguishes the centre of some circles.' He follows this with a strange footnote (which reads 'See Karn Lechart in Glamorganshire, Camden page [illegible]'

NOTES FROM CARN LLECHART STONE CIRCLE-CAIRN, NEAR PONTADAWE: 20TH APRIL 1992 CE

I sit with my knees pressed against one of the three main stones of this burial kist, within this strange monument. We arrived at Carn Llechart in blazing sunshine and were astounded by this complex tomb and ritual place. Like Carn Bugail, it is outrageously alone and away from people. This moor is now windy as I write, the light has been cast away by an ocean line of cloud that loomed up around thirty minutes after we arrived. Down the hill is a daft cromlech affair of three enormous pieces of rock. One rests casually on the other and below are the small rocks and mini-scree of a tomb. Across the field there are seven large standing stones. The stones are potentially large and three are on the horizon while the others are scattered in a potential of alignments, but nothing to scream about. I've looked at the field and the alignments are obvious. Very cool… The sheep are wailing, their lambs bleating. High on this moor there is a magic going on. And yet a large petrol tanker/gasoline truck has been parked against the fence to the field of stones and looks as though it was set on fire… Carn Llechart is all-mysterious.

Carn Llechart requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
160.852206

Cerrig Duon & the Maen Mawr

Standing on a natural shelf above the river in the dark Tawe Valley, the stones of Cerrig Duon, meaning 'Black Rock', are a place of great sanctuary very deep in the magnificent desolation of the mountains of Fforest Fawr. The ovoid shape of the stones is around seventy feet in diameter, though each sandstone upright is no more than two feet tall. The Maen Mawr, however, is a broad massif stone around six feet tall but of tremendous bulk, weighing around nine tons. She dominates the flattened sacred area, with its long grass like a dry long-haired rug, and the view south down the Tawe Valley is fabulous.

NOTES WITH GLOVED HANDS FROM CERRIG DUON STONE CIRCLE AND THE MAEN MAWR: 6 P.M., 20TH APRIL 1992 CE

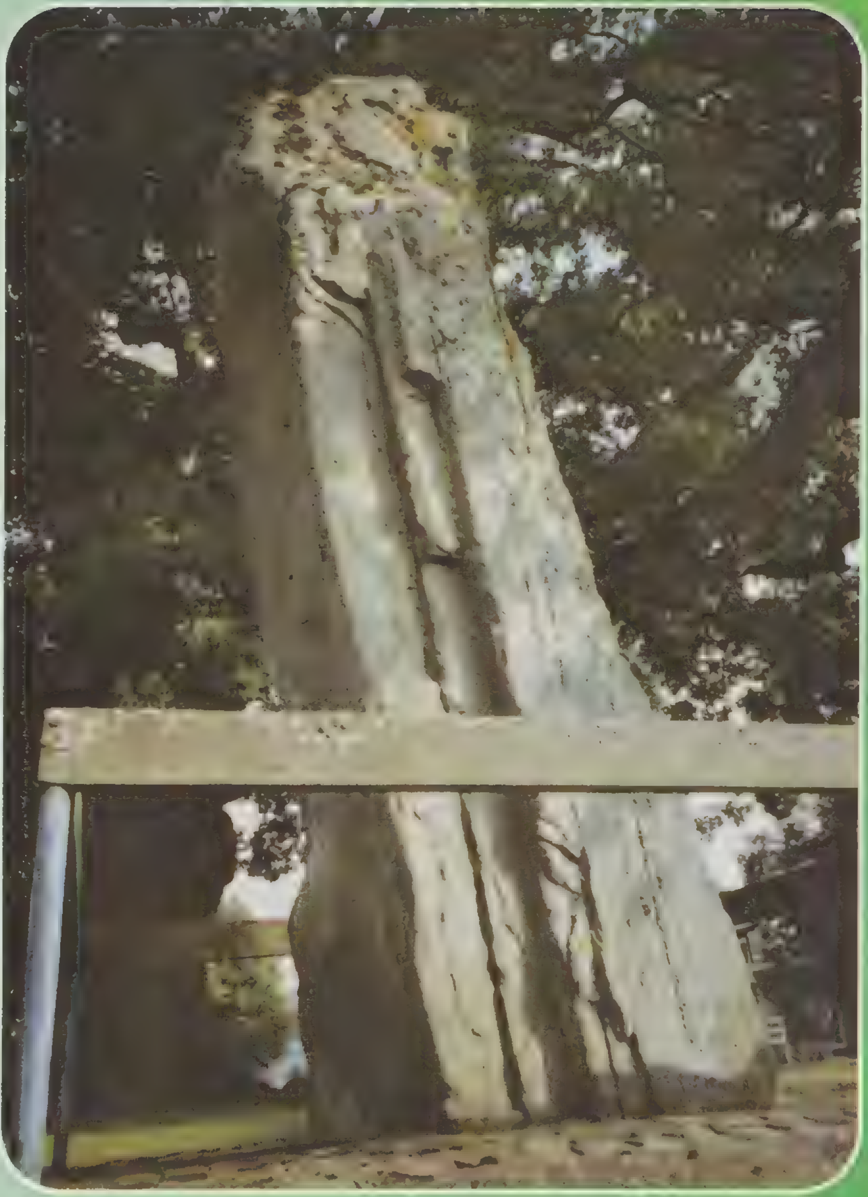
Open moorland is tricky. When the wind is up, it is easy to get all cold and feel that the wind is blowing right through. Then back at home, nostalgia. Nostalgia is a yearning for a feeling that didn't seem magical at the time. But today is magical. These stones at Cerrig Duon are merely markers for a very special place. The circle is secondary to the place and the plateau upon which this circle is set is truly a magical spot. The Maen Mawr is a strange outlier as it overshadows the whole circle. The largest of the nineteen stones at Cerrig Duon is about eighteen inches tall; many are only stumps of nine inches to afoot. But the Maen Mawr is a big lump – six feet of granite only nine yards from the circle. The more places I visit, the less I need to see – I get such a feel for place now. Really, there is no real need for masses of material remains. This site is on a plateau – on either side a high mountain, shallow sided but ominous as the valley of the Maen Llia.^{G} At each end of the valley, the clouds duel for weather supremacy. One end is billowing and tumultuous, Blakean in high hopes and with the sunset on its side. This triumphant end is happy but awed by the other end of the valley, which is as glowering as any in Tolkien's Mordor. I sit in the middle of the two and soak up the atmosphere at this gentle site. The Maen Mawr guards her flock – the stones of Cerrig Duon.

Cerrig Duon & the Maen Mawr require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
161.233168

4 a) 4

The Growing Stone



The famous Growing Stone of Cwrt-y-Gollen stands on the high flat terrace of land between the confluence of the rivers Usk and Grwyne Fawr. This area is dominated by the huge Mother mountain of Pen-y-Fâl to the near north-east, more famously known as the Sugarloaf. The Growing Stone is a huge block of red sandstone standing next to a fine old oak tree about 300 yards from the Usk. The stone is around thirteen feet tall and has squared faces, being thirty by forty-seven inches thick. The first time I visited this stone, idiot authority had rivetted the information plaque onto the stone itself, defacing the very monument they were announcing and causing a great nine-inch band of rusty discharge to cascade from the rivet holes. Fortunately, this arrogance was accompanied by such inferior workmanship that the plaque 'came off in my hands', revealing a grotesque combination of thick insect larvae encrusted with further large amounts of the same rusty/sandstone discharge. Considering its name, this wonderful longstone has been rarely written about, the earliest example probably being in Edwin Poole's *Illustrated History and Biography of Brecknockshire* in 1886. The growing stones of legend tend to have been made of pudding stone, the individual lumps in the stone thought to be capable of swelling overnight. But this sandstone pillar is unrepresentative of what many also called 'breeding stones' or 'mother stones'. As late as the 17th century, Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, believed that such stones shot out of the ground naturally.

The once magnificent chambered cairn of Gwernvale, nearby, has suffered more than most monuments from its proximity to the Roman road Via Julia, later to become the A40. Old antiquarian prints show Gwernvale as a large dolmen, but excavations to facilitate road-widening in 1978 removed all of the large loose cairn material, resulting in the sad spectacle today seen beside the A40 at 161.212193.

DRIZZLE DOWN – NOTES FROM THE GROWING STONE: 6TH AUGUST 1997 CE

It's pouring with rain in the Usk Valley, a thick hilltop mist passing down the trees on the other side of the river, leaving the first hundred feet or so clear and eerie. Nowadays, the stone is in the green avenue of the Army Cadets. Its position is further undermined by the fact that the explanation plaque has been rivetted onto the stone itself. The north-west face of the stone has two quarried surfaces which cut out strata of the stone like some Orcadian monument.

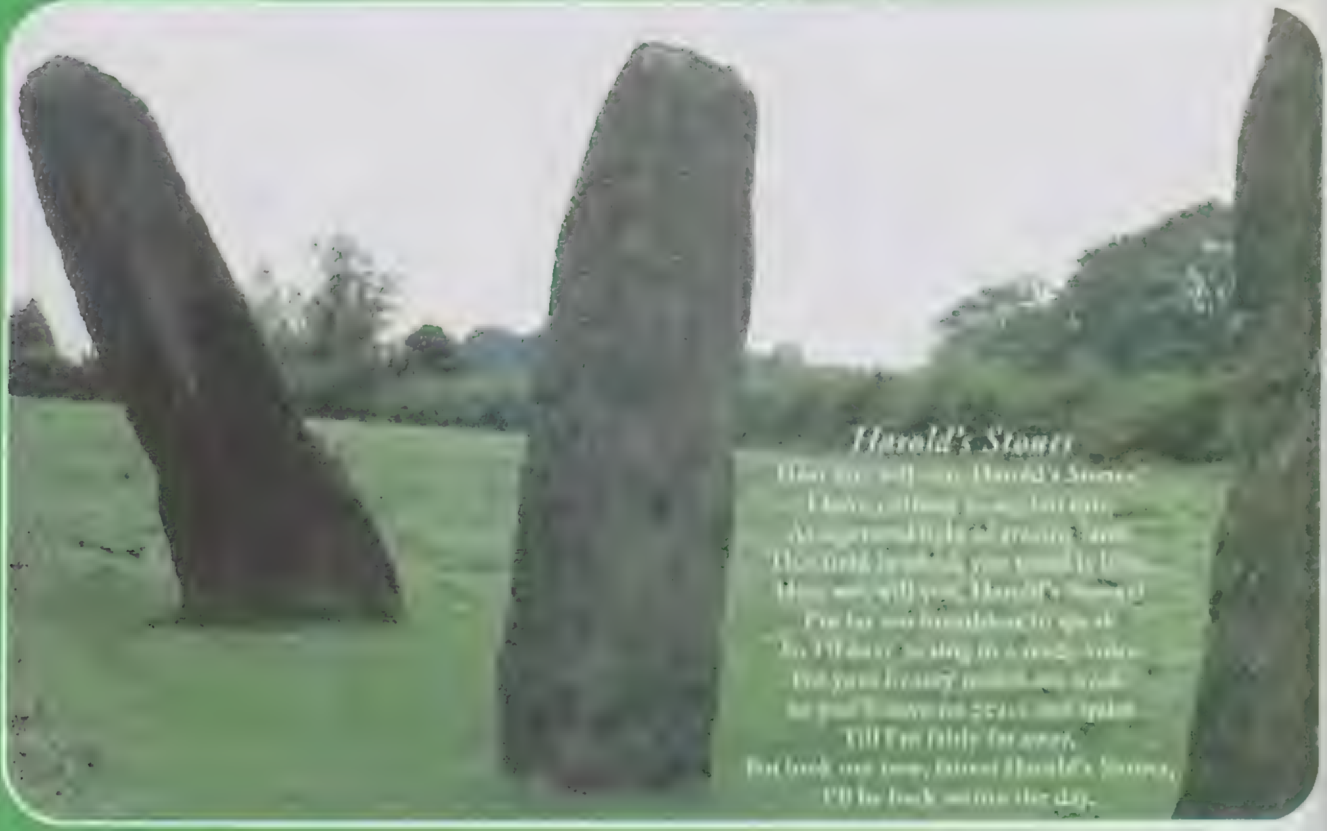
The Growing Stone stands alongside the A40 between Crickhowell and Abergavenny, in the trimmed entranceway of Cwrt-y-Gollen Army Cadets. Plenty of parking spaces.

4 a) 5

ORDNANCE SURVEY
162.499051

Harold's Stones

The most famous standing stones in Gwent are the legendary Harold's Stones in the village of Trellech, which actually means 'three stones'. The stones are a wondrous alignment, standing at ten, twelve and fourteen feet high, and made of a local puddingstone, a conglomerate of pebbles anciently solidified in a natural cement. The largest of the stones leans dramatically and ultra-phallically. Trellech as a Pagan centre was clearly something which continued into the historical Christian period, what with the dramatic and pyramidal rugged cross still visible in Trellech churchyard, and the mysterious Tump Terret, a likely prehistoric mound at 162.499054. Legend has it that Harold's Stones were hurled into their present positions by Jack O'Kent, a giant of great ancient legend believed to be in league with the Devil himself. Others say that he was Owain Glyndwr in disguise. As a young swineherd, he had magically placed all the cows in the trees to stop them trampling the crops! But in the story of Harold's Stones, Jack O'Kent had a contest with the Devil to see who could throw the farthest. Jack won the contest when he stood on the top of Ysgyryd Fawr, about twelve miles away, and hurled the three stones into the ground right where they stand today.



NOTES FROM HAROLD'S STONES, TRELLECH, GWENT: SATURDAY 25TH MAY 1991 CE

Three enormous phalluses [are] rising out of the ground at this idyllic place. Two are around nine feet tall whilst the largest one, which I am sitting against, is an enormous twelve-foot erection charging out of the earth at about sixty degrees. Whilst William Stukeley drew them wildly too big, these three megaliths are handsome and intriguing in their peaceful enormity. One year ago, Dorian and I sat in a rowing boat on Lake Llangorse and read about the giant Jack O'Kent throwing these stones from the top of the Sugarloaf Mountain in a duel with the Devil. Now we are here and what a duel it must have been… The largest angled stone is riddled with hunks of white quartz and also occasional rose quartz. Our dog Smelvin just circled each megalith individually then returned to the first one, circled it again and peed on it. The smallest stone is very similar in erosion to two of the weathered stones at Nine Stones Close.G The erosion is downward, like a sheaf of arrows modelled in clay. It is easy to push a hand into the crevice. There is a beautiful peace in this place. Local children play here and must have always done so.

Travel to Trellech, on the B4293, south of Monmouth. The stones are visible as you pass through the village. Also investigate the church and signposts thereabouts. In many road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
160.922193

4 a) 6

Maen Llia

Pronounced 'My-ann Thleeya (approx)'. The great longstone known as Maen Llia stands in the river valley of Afon Llia in the mountainous Fforest Fawr, a great desolation west of the Brecon Beacons. Standing in the lea of the huge mountains of Fan Llia to the east and Fan Nedd to the west, the Maen Llia is a great north–south facing slab over twelve feet high, nine feet broad, yet only thirty inches thick. Legend has it that at cock's crow every morning, the great stone forsakes its neighbouring river, the Llia, and climbs the great mountain to the west in order to drink from the waters of the river Nedd on the other side.

[illegible] our exploded car.

NOTES FROM THE CAR IN THE DRIVING RAIN AT THE MEGALITH CALLED THE MAEN LLIA, SOUTH OF SENNYBRIDGE:
5.30 P.M., 28TH SEPTEMBER 1991 CE

I'm soaking wet. Soaking round my socks and eyebrows but dizzy all over in a good, good way. Outside, the valley hangs a heavy net curtain of autumnal gloom – as ominous as the Welsh valley can get. That is indeed gloomy. The sheep are huddled, the ground is shocking and I want to merely skim the surface as I run… But the Maen Llia stands there. She stands there and she will stand there forever. North–south aligned and ready for the eastern sunrise over the near mountain, the Maen Llia lies in her own shallow pool of water in this unremitting show of drama that the valleys are sending down upon us. About fifteen miles away, I was born – in similar rain, but this place … there is a quiet and awesome power of the single monolith on its own in a lonely valley. It gives the place extraordinary power. Today we drove from London to see a single twelve foot by eight foot standing stone; we invested as much energy in this sole megalith as an entire trip to Avebury. Now, I am writing from the sanctuary of the car, in sight of the Maen Llia off the road about thirty yards…

Maen Llia
1.
[illegible]
Through the rain
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
At the Maen Llia
[illegible]
3.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
at the Maen Llia
[illegible]

2.
With a [illegible] sleeping
Behind us in the car
The ferocious storm
Took the stone from our view
And we wanted to leave
But the stone would not leave
Or the car would not let us
Depending on your view.
4.
At last the car fired up
But the lights refused to work
So we drove home in
the twilight
And it blew up in our driveway
The moral of this story is:
Leave the car at home
There's nothing more
rewarding
Than a [illegible]

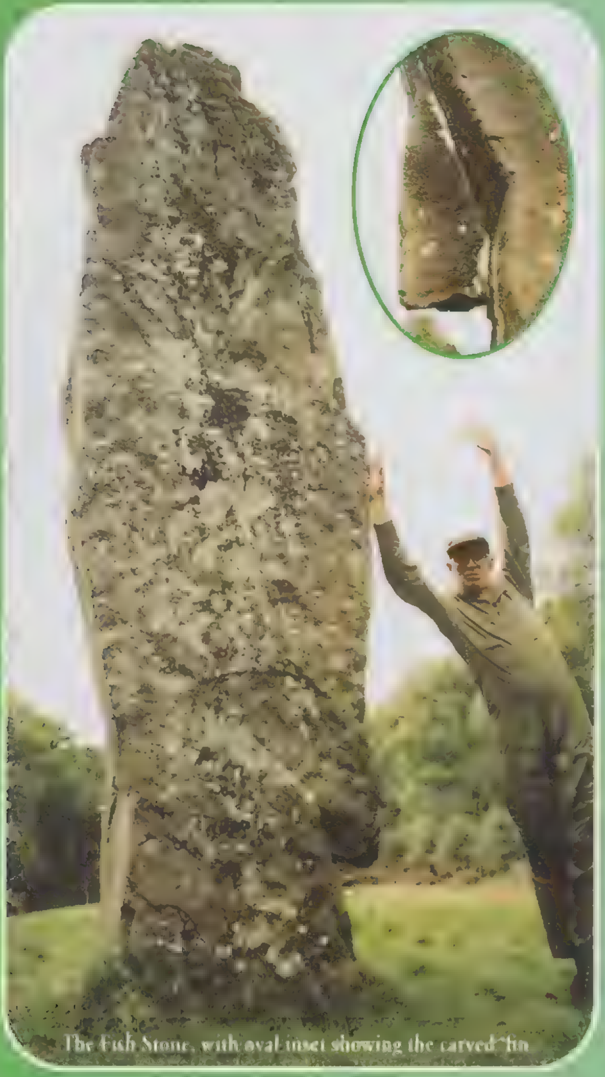
From Sennybridge on the A40, travel south to Heol Senni, then continue southwards choosing either of two roads (they soon conjoin ahead). Travel for what must be over three miles until Maen Llia appears on the left, set back from the road.

4 a) 7

Myarth

The magical longbarrow hill called Myarth stands in grand and fertile landscape at the confluence of the rivers Usk and Rhianngoll halfway between Crickhowell and Lake Llangorse. It is a huge tree-covered massif and exerted considerable prehistoric influence hereabouts, so much so that the Romans built a fort at Pen-y-Gaer a half mile to the north, whilst the military road, the Via Julia, similarly clung to its northern edge. Many standing stones ring this long sacred hill, the greatest probably being the enormous Fish stone which stands on top of the steep northern bank of the river Usk at Penmyarth in the southern lea of Myarth. At eighteen feet, this beautiful longstone of old red sandstone is the tallest in Wales. It has saucer-like depressions carved on its face, and has been described by the Welsh writer Chris Barber as looking ‘like a huge salmon jumping vertically with its tail touching the ground’. Legend has it that the Fish stone was quarried on the south side of the river and somehow manoeuvred across to the north bank. There are no similar stones on the north side of the bank, so this seemingly impossible task may well be true. The hoary and lichen-encrusted Llwyn-y-Fedwen stone overlooks the rushing river Usk, over fourteen feet tall and weighing over twenty tons. It was the subject of Francis Hitching’s *Earth Magic* TV programme in the mid-1970s. Whilst the results were inconclusive, an Argentinian physicist from Imperial College, London, called Eduardo Balanovski declared, ‘We went there and found something measurable ... I do not personally believe that the stone was accidentally chosen or accidentally placed. The people who put it up there knew about its power, even if they didn’t know about electromagnetism.’ Finally, the eight feet tall Tretower stone is located in a hawthorn hedge close to the river Rhianngoll, overlooked by the Crickhowell–Talgarth road at Ty-Cynfin. Nothing much is known about this stone, but its grooved top is similar to the Devil’s Arrows.

The Tretower Stone



The Fish Stone, with oval inset showing the carved ‘fin

Llwyn-y-Fedwen at Llangynidr

NOTES AGAINST THE FISH STONE, MYARTH: 17TH OCTOBER 1997 CE

The monolith is cut from rock whose horizontal strata allowed the Ancients to cut and finish it in a similar manner to those standings made of Orcadian flagstone... *At Llangynidr at the Llywn-y-Fedwen, same day*: Feathers and the shoulder blade of a sheep currently dwell in the lowest recess, obviously left as offerings by local Pagans, and showing the stones’ continued use up to the present day... *At the Tretower stone, Myarth, same day*: Stuck in the hedge which owes its position to the standing stone, this ancient marker has the same remarkable weathering at its summit as the Devil’s Arrows and the Goggleby Stone.

THE FISH STONE: 161.183198
THE TRETOWER STONE: 161.180219
LLANGYNIDR STONE: 161.156204

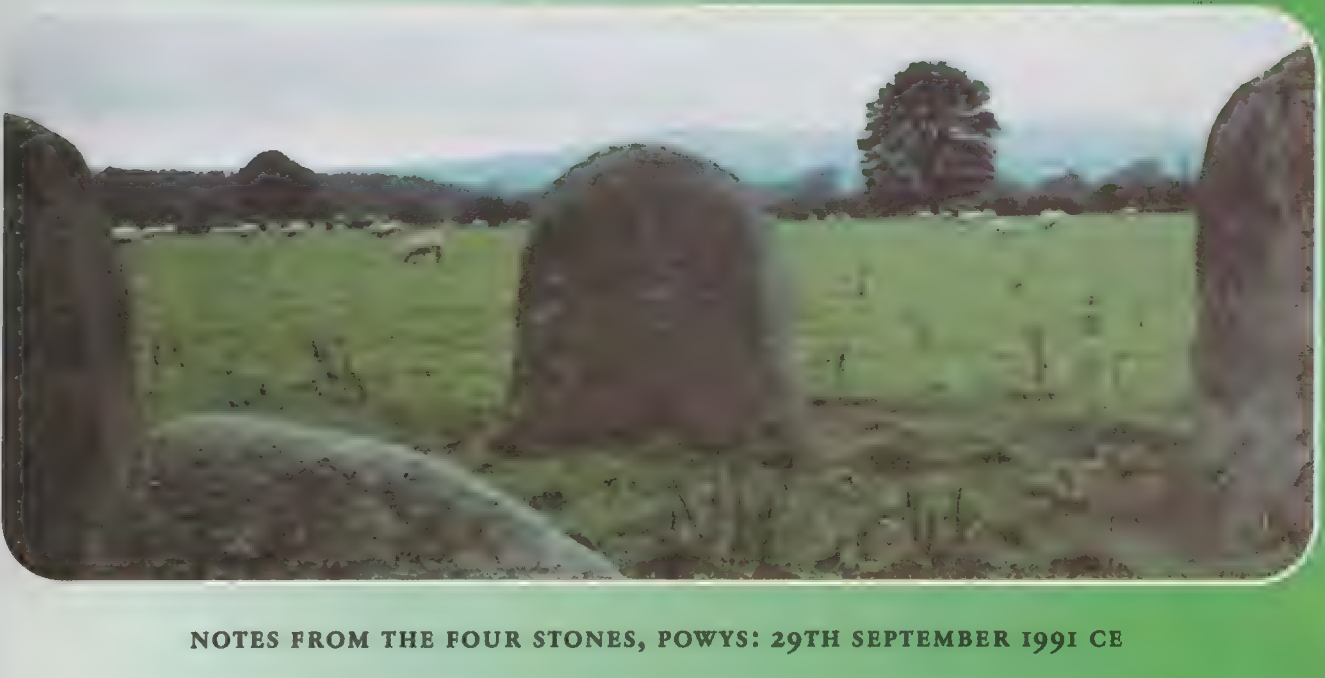
These sites all require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
148. SEE BELOW

4 a) 8

Old Radnor & the Four Stones

The large boulders known as the Four Stones stand in flat beautiful pasture surrounded on all sides by distant rising mountains. It is an exquisite spot marked by many other small standing stones and a fair amount of Bronze Age barrows. This aberrant four-poster stone circle has given antiquaries and archaeologists great difficulties of interpretation down the years. Originally considered to have been a denuded cairn-circle, the Four Stones are actually an unusually placed Scots/Irish four-poster in a highly unlikely position. Legend says that the stones are the grave markers of four kings killed in a battle hereabouts, but this was clearly an overlaid Dark Ages story due to a lack of an information. Another legend states that one of the circle stones was used as a font in the church at Old Radnor during the reign of King John at the beginning of the 13th century, but this would have made the circle a five-stone ring and none are known to be missing. Indeed, the small diameter of this circle of large stones would preclude the erection of even one more – the largest stone is over six feet tall and would have required thirty people to have put it into place. Yet another legend states that on hearing the bells of Old Radnor church, the Four Stones cross the half mile of pasture to the east and take a drink in Hindwell Pool. There seems to be a clear prehistoric link with this pool, as the Romans built a fort on its banks just at the junction of the Hindwell Brook, so it was still causing them concern by historical times. But the link to Old Radnor is even more obvious, and Aubrey Burl has suggested that the Four Stones were taken from Hanter Hill two miles south of Old Radnor, so that the megalith builders would have passed Old Radnor with their potential circle stones. The church of Old Radnor is built upon a large prehistoric mound thought to be Bronze Age and the links between the Old Radnor mound and the stone circle are inextricably woven together through time and legend – perhaps the ancient perambulation revolved around the stone circle, the mound of Old Radnor and the mystical Hindwell Pool.



NOTES FROM THE FOUR STONES, POWYS: 29TH SEPTEMBER 1991 CE

I'm sitting on the leaning stone ... on a blustery autumn day. All around is the most beautiful countryside equal to the Nine Stones Close[G] in Harthill ... The largest is six feet tall and the smallest around three feet... The Four Stones are unassuming – I think they are a simple stone circle but some think they are the remains of a round or longbarrow. True, there is a raising of the ground all around but there is nothing in their shape to suggest that at any time they were supports for a capstone, or even that there were other stones before. The Four Stones circle is surprisingly complete, the only imperfection being in the angled tilt of the smallest stone, which I am presently sitting upon... The sheep were let into the field soon after I arrived, now they edge closer to me as the light begins to go. Fifty yards away, my six-week-old daughter, Albany, is having her nappy changed...

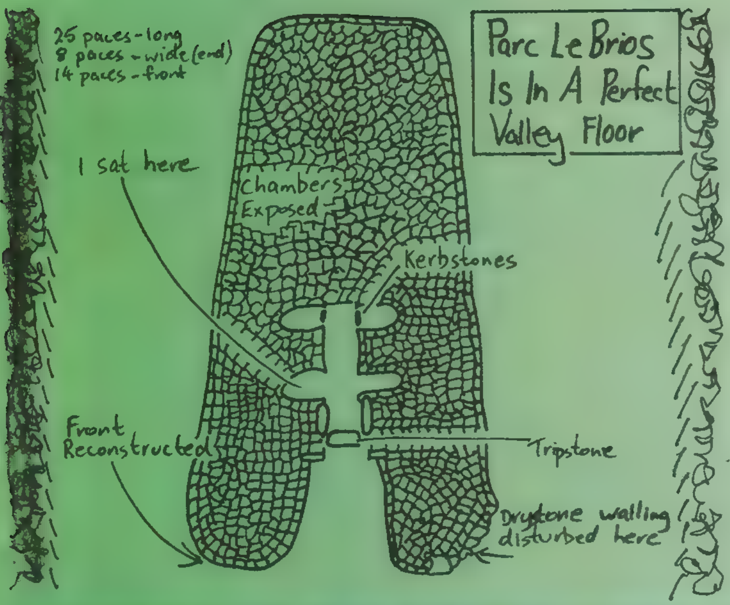
Old Radnor church is in the village of Old Radnor, close to Burlingjobb and Walton. The Four Stones are off the A44, on the minor road to Kinnerton. They are found to the left, behind a hedge, opposite a house.

THE FOUR STONES: 148.246608
HINDWELL POOL: 148.257606
OLD RADNOR CHURCH: 148.250591

4 a) 9

ORDNANCE SURVEY
159.537898

Parc Le Breos



Situated in the fastness of the Park Woods area of the Gower peninsula, Parc Le Breos is by far the most impressive and complete of the remaining chambered cairns in this area. The monument was built on the flat quiet valley floor of a stream leading into the sea at Pennard Pill. This now-roofless monument was formerly a transepted gallery tomb of the Severn–Cotswold tradition, like Belas Knap.[G] The passageway is almost twenty feet long and is entered via the horned forecourt, which is defined by excellent low drystone walling. Though the capstones are long gone, Parc Le Breos is still a dramatic and large construction, roughly sixty feet by fifty feet in a long stretched oval shape. Excavated in 1869 by Lord Avebury, Sir John Lubbock, and in 1960–1 by R. J. C. Atkinson, the remains of twenty bodies were discovered in the small chambers along with fragments of Neolithic pottery.

Hanging from a tree, I managed to snap this elevated shot of Parc Le Breos.

NOTES & DRAWING FROM PARC LE BREOS BURIAL CHAMBER, GOWER PENINSULA: 19TH APRIL 1993 CE

Today is perfect. In clear sky I sit, my head peeping out of the left near chamber in this here burial chamber. Parc Le Breos is a beautiful combination of destruction and survival. There are many better examples of this tomb-type (e.g. Stoney Littleton),[G] but the position in its quiet wood-enclosed sides gives me a glimpse of how ancient Man felt as he was building this tomb. Birds twitter and echo their delight in this valley as I write. The sun is high behind my head – such a peace is in this valley that people, walkers that pass this trail every few minutes, do not disturb but add that brittle human element. I am back, not in a time of prehistory, but I feel as a man of many centuries ago taking shelter in this place, wondering 'What man made this place?' Parc Le Breos is unphotographable… Yet to be here, everything else flows away.

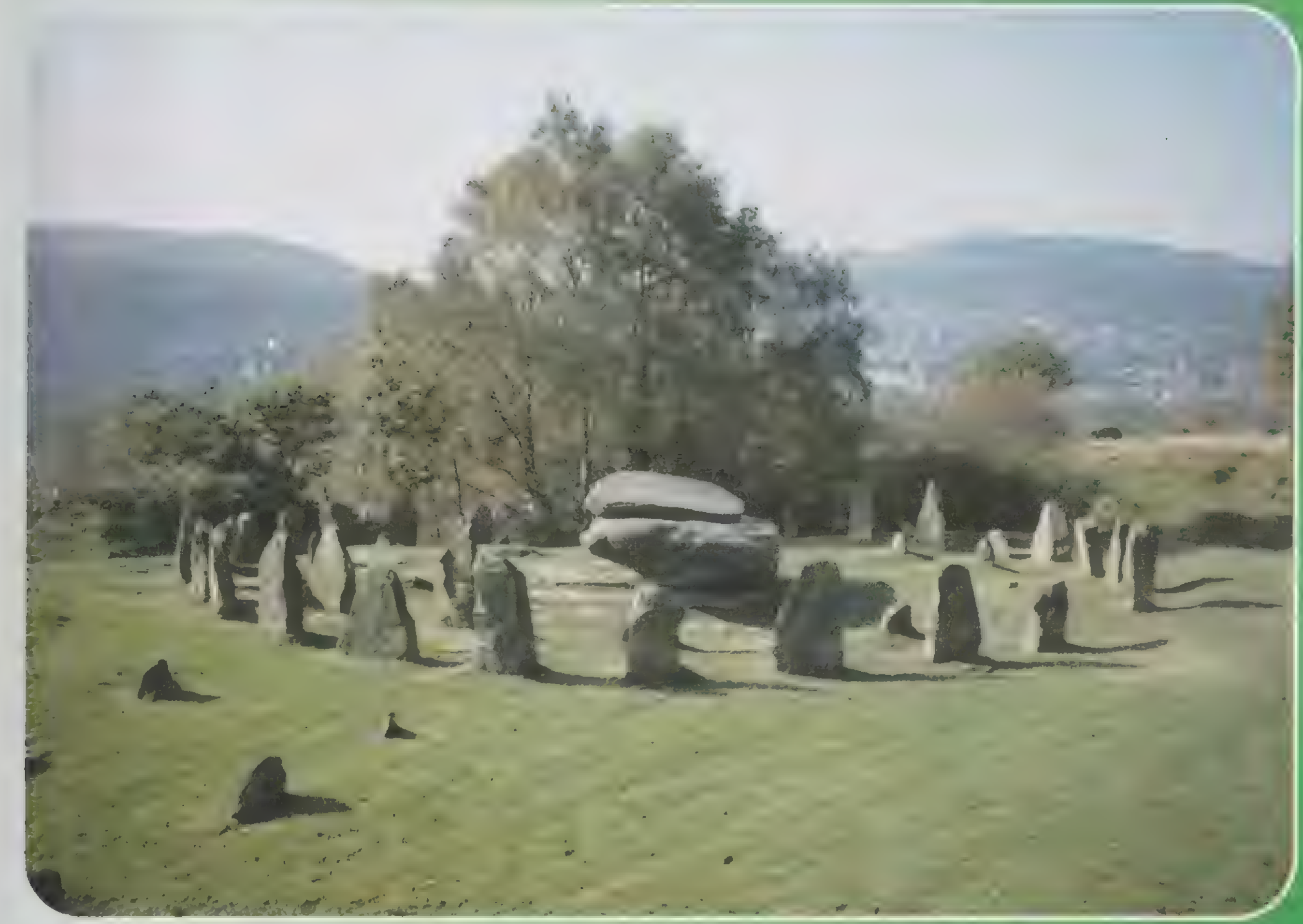
This site requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
170.082901

4 a) 10

Pont-y-Pridd Rocking Stone

Y Carreg Siglo, the great rocking stone, stands high on the ground overlooking the confluence of the two sacred rivers Rhodda and Taff. Before the coming of the mines and the houses, this was a devastatingly beautiful valley, and the Carreg Siglo's position would have been invincible as a great gorsedd stone, and a place of Oracles. Pont-y-Pridd means 'Bridge of Bridgit' and the confluence of the two rivers may have some sacred symbolic Goddess connotation. The rocking stone has been famous for centuries and, according to 18th-century Archdruid Iolo Morgannwg, the Carreg Siglo is the original site of the Gorsedd or Assembly of Welsh Bards. The standing stones around the rocking stone are not ancient, erected only in the past century, in deference to the site's continuing use as a community ritual centre.



NOTES AT THE CARREG SIGLO, PONT-Y-PRIDD: 22ND OCTOBER 1997 CE

On this perfect blue sky day, the rocking stone appears to live in perfect surroundings, despite the huge road now cutting through the valley below and the houses strewn across Pont-y-Pridd Common. Carreg Siglo still retains its marvellous isolation despite being a two-minute walk from the nearby cottage hospital. The double circle of recent standing stones adds considerably to the atmosphere of the rocking stone and the tiny avenue of squat low stones gives the impression of Cerrig Duon[G] or even something from Dartmoor. Large stones still proliferate across the common and the remarkable atmosphere of this whole valley is highlighted by the way in which everything appears so recently overlain on the landscape.

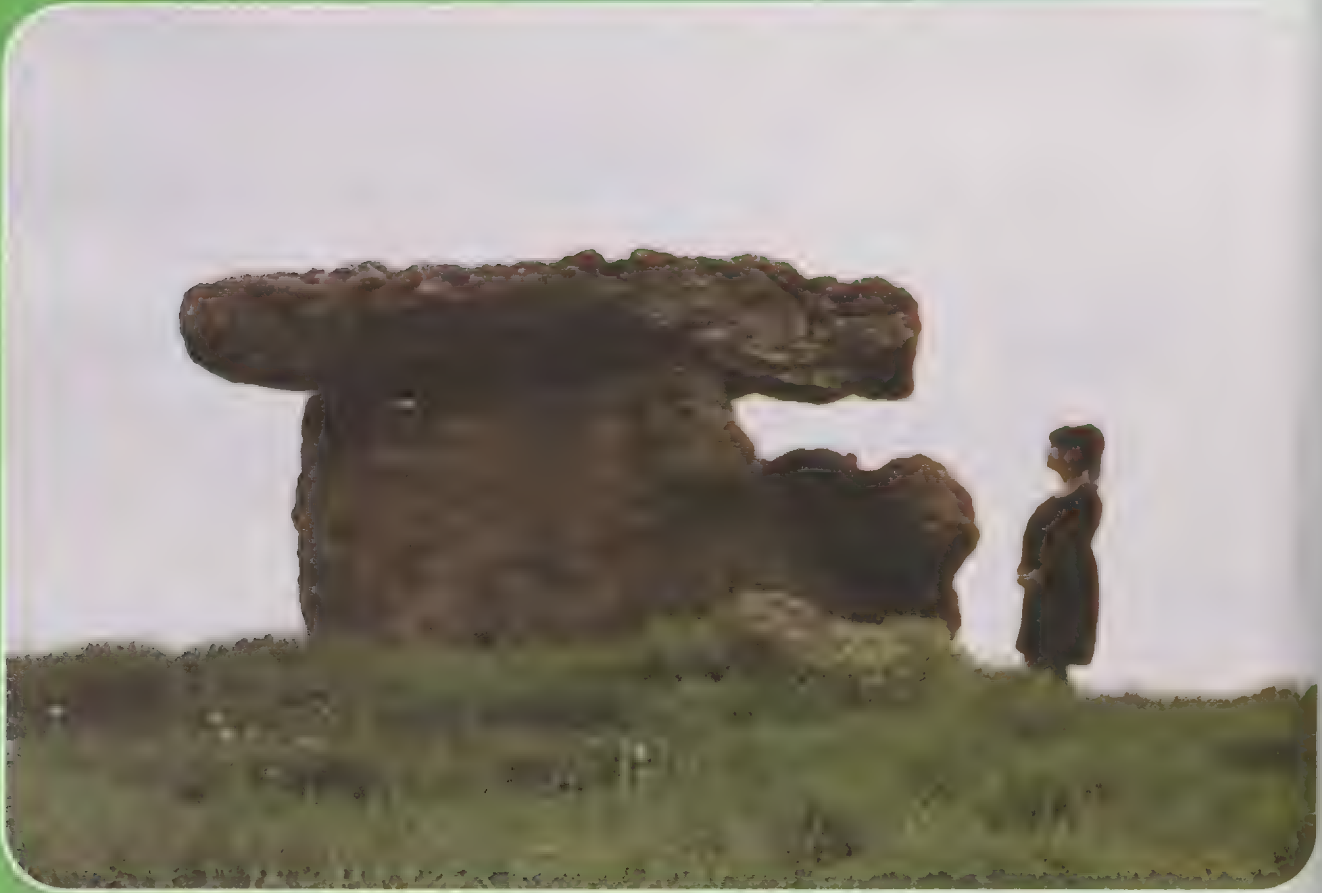
Make for the Pont-y-Pridd District Cottage Hospital, high above the town on the eastern shelf, above the A4054. Cross the road and make for the edge of the hillside. The rocking stone is close to a fine rushing stream.

4 a) 11

ORDNANCE SURVEY
171.102723

St. Lythans

This huge dolmen, known as Gwal-y-Filiast, or the Greyhound Bitch's Kennel, stands in impressive green pasture known as the Accursed Field. It is said that this name alludes to the field's lack of fertility. But the dolmen stands so close to a verdant and overgrown faerie ring that it seems more likely that the name 'Accursed' is a back formation, or late rationalisation, of the original name 'Field O'Koeur'. St. Lythans is a huge dolmen with great slab sides of mudstone and a magnificent capstone with brutal weathering on its exposed top. The low remains of a long cairn have been noted spreading out almost thirty yards behind the monument. Legend has it that St. Lythans is a deeply magical place. Whisper a wish at Halloween and the stones will grant it. On Midsummer Eve, the capstone whirls around three times and the stones all go to bathe in the local stream, though there are too many in the area to work out to which stream the legend refers.



NOTES FROM ST. LYTHANS CHAMBERED TOMB: SUNDAY 26TH MAY 1991 CE

Climbing up from the road, behind thick hedges, the cromlech is solitary and gentle in its overgrown field. The capstone is weathered to enormous degrees – I climbed up and meditated for ten minutes and the roof is no bed. I tingled and flashed and soon climbed down, as I worry about these unknown forces. But such a poetic place, inferior in size to Tinkinswood,[G] one-and-a-half miles away, but simple in its incredible antiquity. Poetic like the Rollrights,[G] unbelievable, crouching there forever here in this field. Across the field about fifty to seventy paces is a large faerie ring of natural bank with trees and hawthorn bushes. I walked around it and felt its bank with my foot and a branch which I took… Today has a curious mood – down the valley a Civil War battle is being re-enacted. There is the sound of gunfire and canons, there is screaming and shouting with intermittent death noise As it echoes across the valley, the cromlech is at peace; a mute witness to 4,000 years of people and their funny ways. A little of its bank remains but what a curiosity: a huge capstone atop three uprights; two are as walls and the interior upright has a hole in it at six feet high that a fist and arm can go right through. Beauty through 360 degrees. Right on!

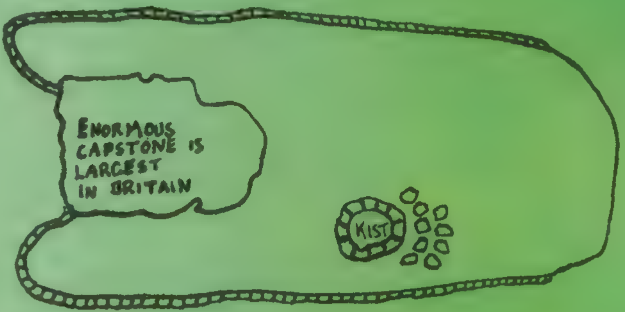
Follow Tinkinswood instructions, but continue along minor road until it ends. Turn left. The dolmen is in the Accursed Field to the right.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
171.603733

4 a) 12

Tinkinswood

Tinkinswood is a magnificent Severn–Cotswold chambered-cairn built to a ground plan specification of the recumbent Great Goddess. This huge monument emerges from woodland which grows all across its tail, whilst at the front its enormous fifty-ton capstone is a relaxed affair, a slightly-cracked megalithic cereal-bar of unfeasible antiquity. At nearly thirty feet long by eighteen feet wide, this is the largest capstone in Britain and it allows space underneath for a chamber of considerable proportions, even with good headroom, and is entered by the 'stumble', a low entranceway devised by the clever placing of one particular 'bent' stone in order to create the illusion of a doorway. Tinkinswood used to be known as Castell Carrigan, which means the Witch's Castle, and locals believed that the faeries live in the stones. To this day, legend has it that if you sleep there on the nights preceding May Day, St. John's Day or Midwinter's Day, you will either die, go insane or become a poet! Right on.



NOTES FROM TINKINSWOOD BURIAL CHAMBER NEAR CARDIFF, SOUTH WALES: 26TH MAY 1991 CE

Walking up onto the open field with this huge megalithic structure in the distance, I had the distinct feeling of having been here before. The hillside is open, like the fields at the Devil's Den^{G} and Little Kit's Coty,^{G} giving the impression that there was tremendous space for the bodies to lie. The Tinkinswood chamber is enormous and trails back for forty-eight paces in length and eighteen paces width. There is an open kist behind the capstone with remains of modern Pagan ceremonies: wax, fires, etc. There are two other unexcavated kists visible but so many more unseen. The capstone is so large as to look unmovable. It weighs fifty tons and is the largest in Britain. The front or fake entrance has been restored to its original herringbone pattern ... the rest of the walling is similar all around, though less perfect. Sitting on top of the capstone, I can see an earthwork to my right which I paced out (starting at the two by three feet standing stones) at 240 paces long. This may be incorrect, but the work goes across a much ploughed field yet there is still much evidence for stone markers or megaliths. The chamber was excavated in 1914 and the remains of the work are still strewn around. I passed through the body hole under the front of the capstone and am now sitting inside the chamber. The ceiling of the capstone is cavernous and off-white, with seams of rose quartz effect in it, though I don't think there is any real crystal. We sat here for two-and-a-half hours whilst Dorian tripped out. I wish these places were described with more sense of awe – this place is an outrageous paradise.

At St. Nicholas, on the A48 west out of Cardiff, take the only left turn. In less than one mile, Tinkinswood will appear over to your right about 400 yards away.

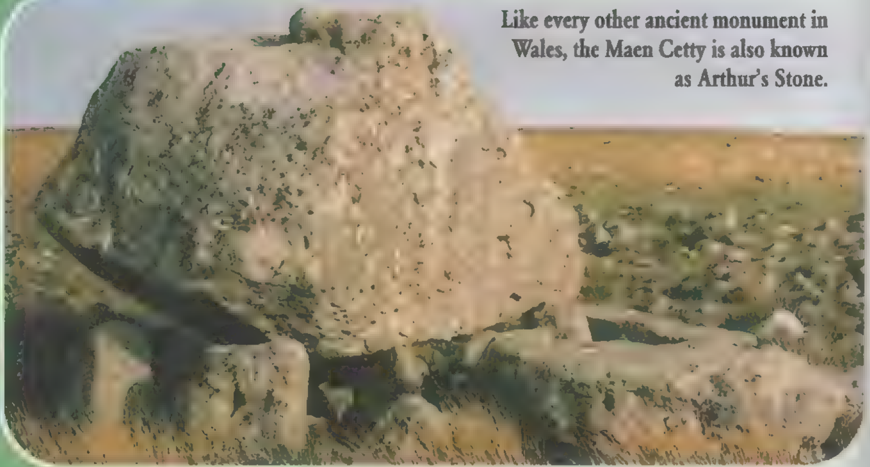
ORDNANCE SURVEY
159.492906

Y Gower Peninsula & the Maen Cetty

[illegible] revealed in the [illegible] of the [illegible] Sampson's Jack, or Erection

The mighty Maen Cetty, also known as just another Arthur's Stone, stands high in the centre of the formidable Gower peninsula, a sacred landscape littered with the remains of past ages. In his collosal work of 1829, *The Celtic Druids*, Godfrey Higgins tells of the ancient legend of the Maen Cetty: 'The three mighty labours of the island of Britain [were] erecting the stone of Cetti, constructing the work of Emrys; and heaping the pile of Cyvrangon.' The Maen Cetty stands high on Cefn Bryn in the centre of the Gower peninsula, with its clearest view north across Llanrhidian Sands and the Loughor Estuary. Though considered to be a dolmen, the Maen Cetty bears more resemblance to the natural stones of Henblas^G on Anglesey. An unfeasibly large capstone stands just eighteen inches off the ground, supported by only three of five apparent supports. In times past, unmarried young women would crawl around the Maen Cetty three times to test the fidelity of their lovers. If the lover did not appear before the young girl after the third time, then she would not marry him.

In the one-and-a-half mile radius around the Burry Green and Fairy Hill area of the beautiful Gower peninsula, there were many standing stones and alignments until the last century. Unfortunately, the most impressive were either torn down or nowadays stand on private ground. Close to Windmill farm, Sampson's Jack is still visitable – a round-topped priapic longstone looking just like its name, which means Sampson's Erection. It is a fine pillar of the local quartz conglomerate with a blunted top and a thick covering of vegetation, and was built into a field wall for many years. Its alternative name, Mansell's Jack, was possibly dreamed up in order to appease the followers of St. Samson, who would have been dismayed to see their holy man restored/reduced to a Pagan fertility symbol.



Like every other ancient monument in Wales, the Maen Cetty is also known as Arthur's Stone.

NOTES FROM THE CAIRN'S CENTRE, NEAR THE MAEN CETTY (ARTHUR'S STONE), GOWER PENINSULA: 19TH APRIL 1992 CE

I'm surrounded first by a layer of stones, then by wild ponies grazing upon this moorland. One hundred yards to my right, the crazy monument called the Maen Cetty crouches, for all the world like an alien's idea of a cromlech… It defies comparison with all other … and its balancing act is formidable but more reminiscent of a Logan rock or other natural formation than a Neolithic tomb. All around the stone are the remains of a mound or cairn. Many of the stones are now gone, giving the impression of a dug mound. *From under the capstone:* It is only eighteen inches deep between capstone and ground. The tomb is supported on only five tiny stones. It is almost unbelievable…

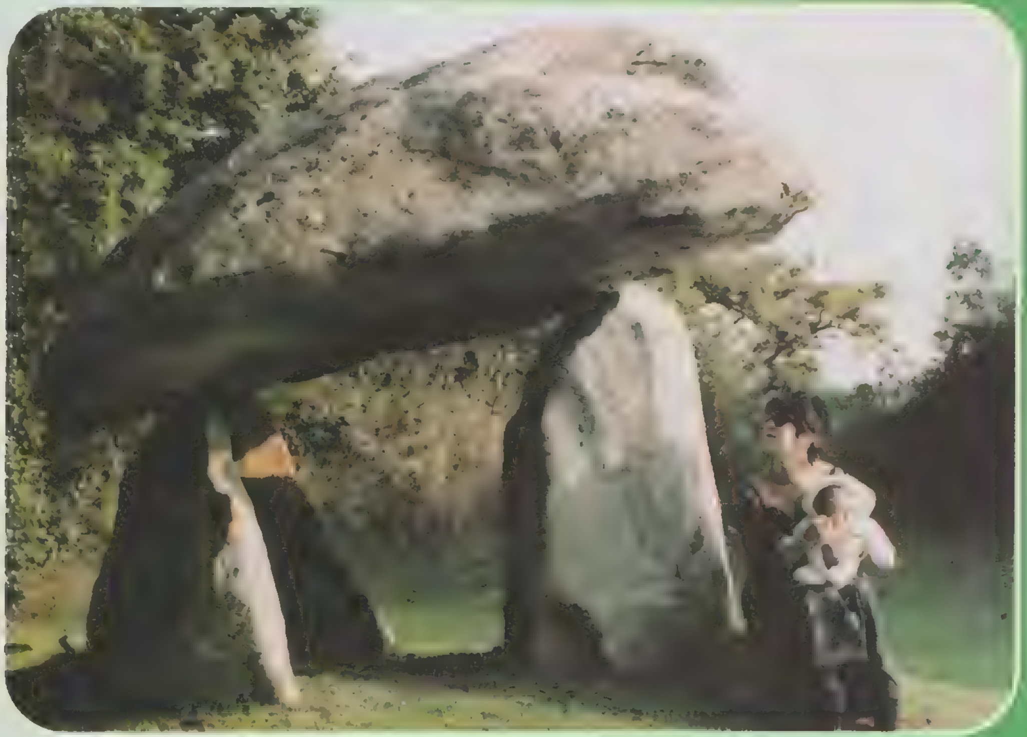
From Reynoldston village, travel east a half mile, until a sign for 'Arthur's Stone' appears. Follow this sign. Every Welsh site seems to fall under this generic title, including Maen Cetty.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
145.060395

4 b) 1

Carreg Coetan Arthur

The tiny dolmen of Coetan Arthur now stands in a recently built estate of holiday chalets. Until 1979, the dolmen had its own field and its privacy, but at least the developers separated the chalets from the monument with a high wooden fence, making visits to the site still exciting. Coetan Arthur has been widely reported through the ages, the first gaining notoriety as a tourist attraction in 1755, in the *Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and South Wales*. In 1781, the author of the famous *Ancient Wiltshire*, Sir Richard Colt-Hoare, described the dolmen in his *A Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales*, further adding to its importance as a new place of antiquarian pilgimage. Coetan Arthur has become a home of artists and mystics these past hundred years, though the intrusion of the holiday homes was a cause of much gnashing of teeth during construction. At the time of the holiday chalet development, archaeologists intended to remove the dolmen to Cardiff Museum, but the plan was, thankfully, overturned by much local protest and the hard work of the Welsh antiquary John Godfrey Williams. Williams is a dowser whose fieldwork at the dolmen has revealed unusual light phenomena. But as he is capable of generating similar kinds of photographs at many megalithic sites, it is difficult to say just how much is of the monument and how much is in the power of the man.



NOTE FROM CARREG COETAN ARTHUR, NEWPORT, PEMBROKESHIRE: 13TH OCTOBER 1991 CE

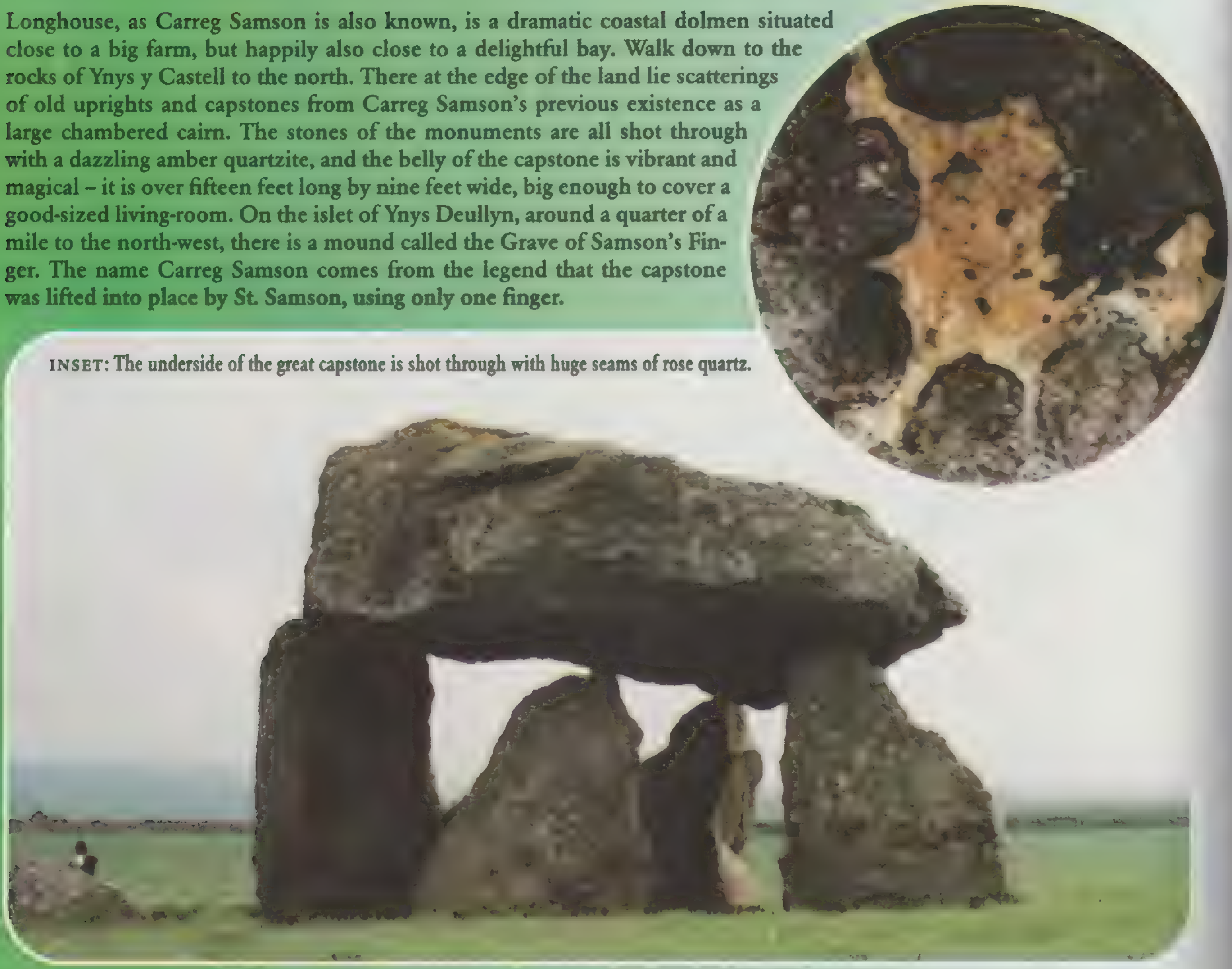
Sun blazes down ... from high above Carn Ingli as the Indian summer cruises on through West Wales. As I sit under the capstone, this unexpected pleasure is so delightful – what I expected was perhaps a few scattered recumbent stones and the bare remains of a chambered tomb. What we have is a perfect and exquisite cromlech – four uprights, the longest no more that four-and-a-half feet tall, supporting a crazy-looking capstone, scattered recumbents – and all in a garden plot between houses at the end of a domestic driveway. Yet from under the capstone, I could only be in yet another New Stone Age monument. There is the chatter of children, the buzzing of flies and the peace of the extraordinary Pembrokeshire National Park. This area is alive with minor monuments – less than half an hour away a guy called Brummie showed us around his house, 200 yards from Pentre Ifan.[G] Ha. From his bedroom I saw three remarkable standing stones perhaps aligned with but certainly of the same complex as Pentre Ifan. This area needs much more exploration and Carreg Coetan Arthur is an example of finding a real prehistoric treasure in someone's back garden.

Travelling west on the A487 towards Newport, as you enter the town take the first right. After travelling only yards, the holiday homes are on the left-hand side. Coetan Arthur is down this road on the secluded right.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
157:848335

Carreg Samson

Longhouse, as Carreg Samson is also known, is a dramatic coastal dolmen situated close to a big farm, but happily also close to a delightful bay. Walk down to the rocks of Ynys y Castell to the north. There at the edge of the land lie scatterings of old uprights and capstones from Carreg Samson's previous existence as a large chambered cairn. The stones of the monuments are all shot through with a dazzling amber quartzite, and the belly of the capstone is vibrant and magical – it is over fifteen feet long by nine feet wide, big enough to cover a good-sized living-room. On the islet of Ynys Deullyn, around a quarter of a mile to the north-west, there is a mound called the Grave of Samson's Finger. The name Carreg Samson comes from the legend that the capstone was lifted into place by St. Samson, using only one finger.



INSET: The underside of the great capstone is shot through with huge seams of rose quartz.

NOTES FROM CARREG SAMSON CROMLECH, LONGHOUSE FARM, OVERLOOKING THE IRISH SEA, DYFED: 12.45 P.M., 13TH OCTOBER 1991 CE

Travelling to this place I am reminded of the evermore obscure lanes and dales, ditches and rivers that we encounter. This time – at the farm gate – we found a wooden sign stating simply 'Cromlech'. Sitting with my back to one of the uprights within the chamber, I am looking through the monument with seagulls cawing and the cliffs about 400 yards in front of me. A swish and a roar of air and suddenly a large flock of birds zips past me, diving low over Dorian's head as she attends to Albany on a recumbent and solitary stone about thirty yards to my right... There are seven uprights in Carreg Samson, but only three are ... supporting the capstone. The stones are shot through with heavy mixes of rose quartz and flint, and the primary upright (closest to the sea and tallest of the six) is so ancient as to look close to disintegration. The sea mist is getting heavy now and the sun way back to my right has trouble peeping out of its veil of cloud... Now the light has gone – I walked down towards the bay and found an ancient bridge, not prehistoric but made from similar stone to Carreg Samson. Like the Devil's Den^{G} and Clatford Bottom, there are the remains of stones obviously taken away by the farmers as they encroached more and more onto the land of the burial tomb. Now, many stones, some of them very large, lie unceremoniously dumped at the foot of the field. But Carreg Samson, the bare skeleton of a tomb, remains in its lovely field. There is a dampness in the air, a dampness of coming autumn, rather than merely sea breezes. And the cromlech is an ancient stone rhinoceros, caught mid-charge in one instant and destined to remain here forever.

On many road atlases, north-west of Mathry, Carreg Samson otherwise requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
145.135294

4 b) 3

Gors Fawr Stone Circle

Pronounced 'Gorse Vowr'. The great stone circle of Gors Fawr is low and mysteriously weighty, a complete and fully-functioning stone monument in a place of real Pagan quiet. It was to stone circles such as Gors Fawr that the Christian Patriarchs such as Martin of Braga were alluding when they felt that such places must be systematically destroyed. How accurate they were, for there is no way such an epitome of heathen worship as Gors Fawr could ever have been Christianised, situated as it was in such a clearly untameable landscape. The stones stand on a vast gorsey common of land in the lea of the marvellous Bridgit mountain range known as Mynydd Preseli, or 'Bree-zilly', using the same root as 'prick' and 'priapic'. Stones and sites dedicated to Arthur cover this area – the writer Chris Barber explains this in his book *The Ancient Stones of Wales*: 'The presence of so many Arthurian sites so close to Gors Fawr must be significant… Arthur may be considered as Arth Fawr, the Great Bear and a representation of the Polar Force.' Elsewhere, Barber makes the connection that the dolmens of Wales tend to be sighted on the Great Bear. It is from these mountains that the famous bluestones of Stonehenge were taken. To the north of the range stands the epic mountain of Foel Drygarn, the mountains sweeping due west around five miles to Craig y Cwm, via the Bridgit cairn called Carn Breseb and the humorously titled Carn Sian (pronounced 'Carn Sharn'). Sixteen stones remain in the circle of Gors Fawr and they are not, remarkably, all made of the local bluestone. Close to the stone circle is an alignment of two stones, both much larger than the circle stones, being both around six feet tall, whose north-east alignment looks towards midsummer sunrise, according to Aubrey Burl. Burl has compared this circle to the tiny Dartmoor stones of Fernworthy,[G] and the more substantial Dartmoor circle called Brisworthy.[G]

Gors Fawr has two much taller outlying stones.

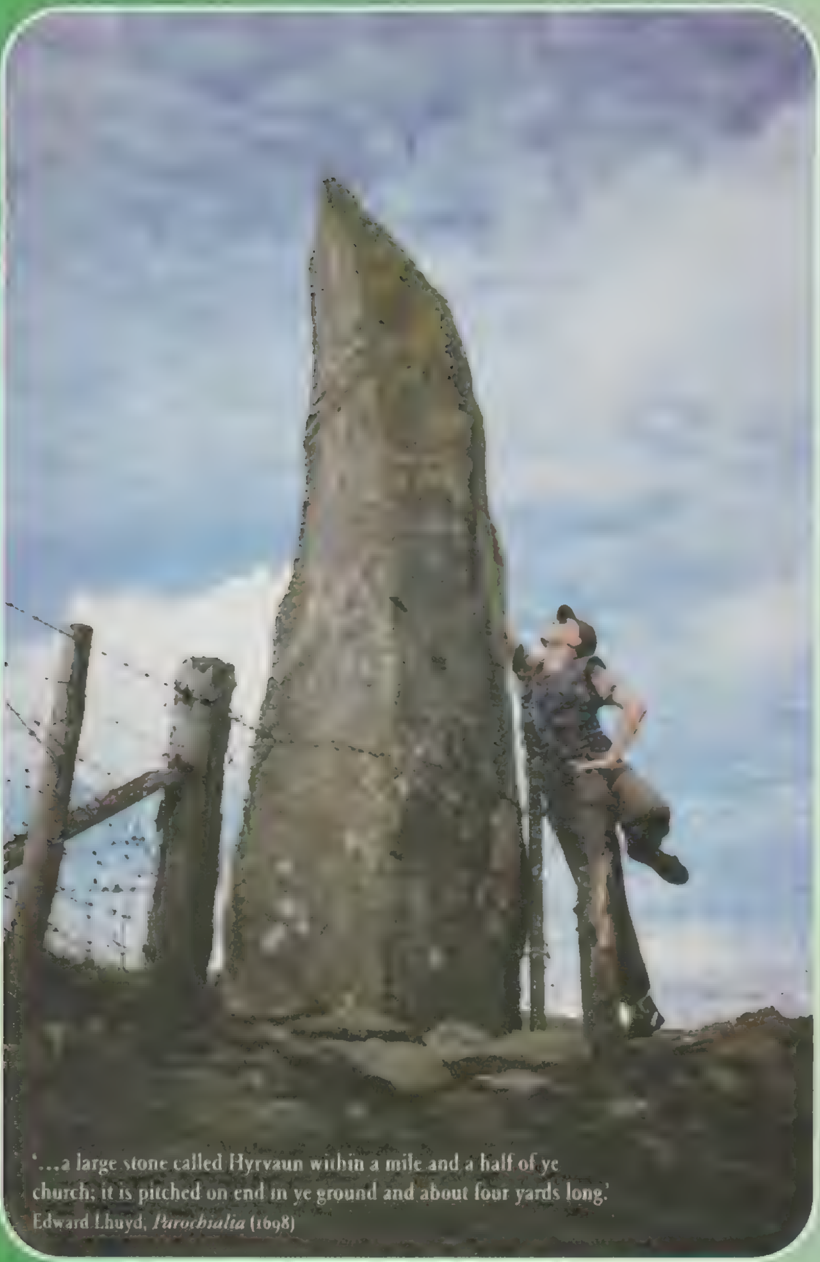
NOTES FROM GORS FAWR STONE CIRCLE, NEAR MYNACHLOG-DDU: 11TH OCTOBER 1991 CE, 5.30 P.M.

I sit on one of the stones whilst Dorian feeds our eight-week-old daughter on the far side of the circle. The sky was overcast when we arrived but the sea breeze blows right through me as the wispy blue in the west traces the sun dipping in and out of the clouds… Away 200 yards are two five feet tall standing stones. They must be related to the circle, though in what way I could not say. These are small stones and no-one would ever comment on how much effort must have gone into bringing them here. No, this is a magical place with magical horizons and an overwhelming pleasantness that only that word can convey in this environment, but the size of these stones is no matter. They were never a show of strength from one tribe to another; they just aren't big enough. So Gors Fawr must be what its atmosphere suggests … a place for magic and a place of ritual… Albany cried the first fifteen minutes we were here and it seemed very correct. These stones must have registered signs of recognition … babes throughout the ages have cried here…

Gors Fawr requires an O.S. map and a sense of local roads.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
146.624464

Hirfaen Gwyddog



'…a large stone called Hyrvaun within a mile and a half of ye church; it is pitched on end in ye ground and about four yards long.'
Edward Lhuyd, *Parochialia* (1698)

The huge projectile known as Hirfaen Gwyddog is the most important longstone in the area, for it anciently defined the county boundary between Cardiganshire and Carmarthen. This giant is over fifteen feet tall and has a circumference of around twelve feet despite its slim appearance, rising spectacularly at the top to an almost banana-shaped curved triangular point. Hirfaen Gwyddog is by far the best known and most recorded standing stone in Dyfed, first appearing in the 10th century as a handwritten note in the margin of *The Book of St. Chad*, an 8th-century work belonging to the church of Llandaf. The margin annotation describes the boundary as being *hebet hirmain guidauc*, translating into 'as far as Hirfaen Gwyddog'. The stone is also the boundary meeting of three farms, suggesting that these farmsteads may be extremely old themselves. A 12th-century foundation charter of the Talley Abbey again confirms the stone as a boundary marker, whilst further confirmations appear in 1324 and 1332, when the longstone is named as Hyrvaen Gudauc. In 1633, the local manor claimed its lands as far as 'a stone called Hirvaen gwyddog', and Edward Lhuyd, who is most famous for his editions of *Camden's Britannica*, was impressed by the stone and noted it in his *Parochialia*. Two dynamite drill-holes in the Hirvaen Gwyddog stone's north-western face testify to earlier attempts to destroy, but by the 19th century, the standing stone had become a tourist attraction, much to the surprise of a letter writer to *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. He wrote that 'Cardiganshire landlords seem to care little for antiquities, and their agents know nothing about them… The time may come as people get better informed when it will be thought an honour to have early British remains undisturbed on an estate; and when a landowner will be better pleased to have a carnedd lying untouched on his ground than to boast that he obtained from it so many cartloads of stone for the adjacent wall.' But even without having considered its once precarious position, Hirfaen Gwyddog has survived magnificently.

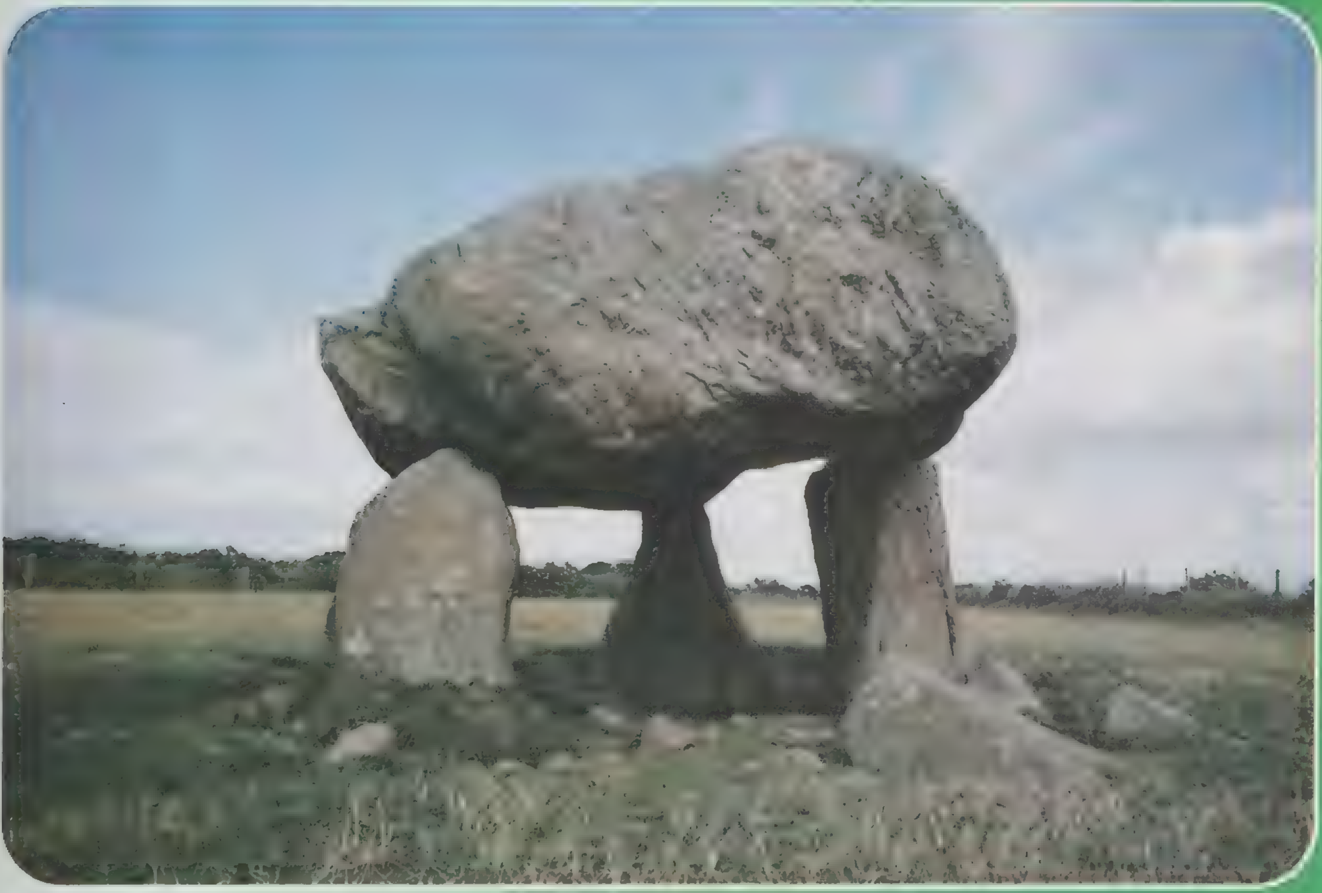
BIRTHDAY NOTES AT HIRFAEN GWYDDOG, NEAR LAMPETER: 22ND AUGUST 1997 CE

Hallelujah, I'm alive! Up here at the Three Farms Stone, the views of splendid forever douse this hot sticky atmosphere with a damp long-grass kiss. Hirvaen Gwyddog stands in its low field walls as ready as the past 4,000 years can make it… The stone stands in the lea hill known as Bryn Hirvaen, or 'the hill of the Longstone', with spectacular views to the east and the valley of the Afon Twrch. To the north-east, the wasteland of the two mountains Bryn Mawr and Craig Twrch charge the scenery with starkness, but the endless trees to the near horizon make this marvellous place fertile and terminally green.

Hirfaen Gwyddog requires an O.S. map.

Llech-y-Tripedd

Translated into English as 'the Tripod Stone', this dolmen is a classic structure situated in the pastureland of the farm upon Penlan. Llech-y-Tripedd stands in the lea of the Mynydd Preseli about six miles away to the south, whilst to the north, the sea is just under a mile away, leaving the Tripedd astride this hilltop. Some say that the name came from the shape of the capstone, but this is unlikely. The dolmen is a perfect antiquarian illustrator's shape, and the name clearly came from the three squat megalithic supports. Legend has it that the Llech-y-Tripedd was hurled to its position here on Penlan by the Keltic St. Samson, who threw it from the mysterious Carn Ingli, situated far to the south-west.



Being where the Stonehenge bluestones originated

1.
High above the sea,
Barely out of sight,
Tripedd stands lonely but unruffled.
Like Carreg Samson,
Its rough and ready capstone
Is not a supersonic bird in flight
But a deflated mushroom –
Here for the duration,
The cows chew on unruffled,
Whilst the dark glowering spine
Of Mynydd Preseli sparkles
And broods to my south...
2.
The Tripod Stone
Alone and unheeded,
Waits patiently
'Till the day she is needed ... again.

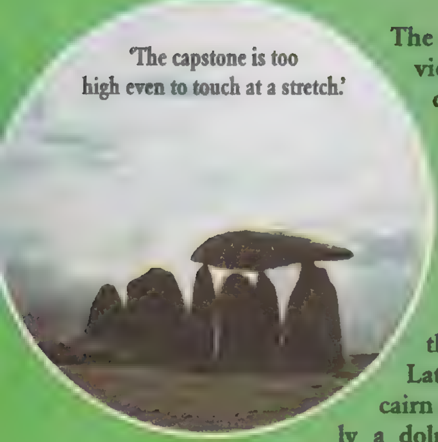
(FROM LLECH-Y-TRIPEDD DOLMEN, MOELGROVE, CARDIGAN BAY: 15TH JULY 1995 CE)

This site stands on farmland in an area which is difficult to find even when you've been there several times. Llech-y-Tripedd definitely requires an O.S. map.

4 b) 6

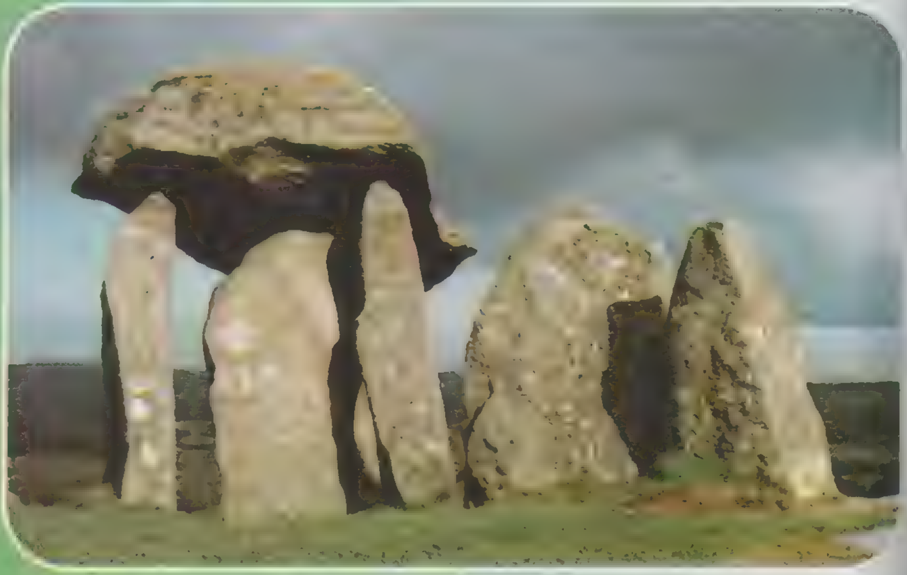
ORDNANCE SURVEY
145.099370

Pentre Ifan



'The capstone is too high even to touch at a stretch.'

The enormous NASA projectile-like dolmen of Pentre Ifan stands on a slope with wide views across Cardigan Bay. She is the most elegant, mesmerising and just plain large dolmen on the British mainland, and gives all visitors real pause for thought. Pentre Ifan has long been thought a temple of Keridwen, though how ancient this provenance really is may be questionable. So many Keltic revivals and antiquarian presuppositions have obscured real scholarship. Pentre Ifan was formerly part of a long mound spreading downhill with elegant lines defining the sacred template of the temple in the shape of a recumbent woman. Before its destruction, much ritual would have taken place at the higher end of the dolmen, as the entrance stones were constantly assembled and reassembled. It appears that this was meant to symbolise the destruction of the female genitalia during childbirth and their subsequent recovery. Later, the robbed and looted monument was systematically stripped of all its remaining cairn material to create Pentre Ifan as we have known it in historical times. It was most likely a dolmen cult which exposed these previously buried Neolithic chambers and released the form that is Pentre Ifan, with its sixteen feet long delta-winged capstone, resting on eight foot high triangular pointed monoliths. Legend has it that there are at Pentre Ifan faerie people who are seen at the stones. They are said to resemble 'little children in clothes like soldiers' clothes and with red caps'. Another local folk tradition claims that, in Keltic times, there was a Druid college here, the large and ancient oak forest below the dolmen being cited as proof of its former existence.



NOTES FROM PENTRE IFAN CROMLECH, OVERLOOKING THE IRISH SEA:
12TH OCTOBER 1991 CE, 2.30 P.M.

Pentre Ifan rests like a megalithic flatiron on its surreal uprights. It's true. Pentre Ifan is the most artistic and confounding place. My dog Smelvin runs around eating grass (something he never does) and the breeze catches us and hurls our psyches down the valley towards the bay... The reconstruction picture of Pentre Ifan is wonderful – I knew immediately what I was looking at. Seems that this place misses its covering mound less than any I've yet seen. The capstone is ... streamlined and wafer-thin. *Notes continued at sunset*: A crescent moon hangs over Pentre Ifan, the sun dying way behind Carn Ingli and the bay mystical with sea fog. Green in Wales is shot with deep, deep blue, the land between the monument and the sea is an ancient oak forest, boulder strewn and Blakean clouds, silent as a fleet of Heinkel bombers over London. I am sitting in the twilight trying to write with blurred vision. This is our third visit today ... this monument leaves me roasting and unafraid...

RETURN NOTE AT PENTRE IFAN, OVERLOOKING CARDIGAN BAY:
15TH JULY 1995 CE

Shell-shocked ... the capstone is too high even to touch at a stretch... Excavations and recent clearing have exposed a line of former chamber stones to the east – a magnificent temple. Pentre Ifan is enthralling, capturing the heart and willing the visitor never to leave.

If Pentre Ifan is not on your road atlas, an O.S. will be necessary in order to negotiate the tangle of back-roads. It is both famous and famously difficult to find.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
157.998359

4 b) 7

Parc-y-Meirw

Pronounced 'Parker Meer-oob'. Overlooked by the matronly eye of the sacred mountain Garn Fawr, this long alignment of seven huge stones is now set fast into a West Walean 'hedge' of megalithic proportions. The name means 'Field of the Dead', and the alignment is the largest in all of Wales. Before the intrusion of field walls, this was a forty-yard alignment of eight huge stones. One writer mentions the tallest stone being over twelve-and-a-half feet tall, but the depth and weight of this stone hedge preclude accurate investigation. It is a magnificent view west-north-west to Fishguard Bay, but the best effect is towards the western horizon, stretching back from the coast at Pen Anglas, just north of Wdig harbour. All along the ridge south-west to Mathry, there are carefully placed cairns and burial chambers, picking out and punctuating the gently-ridged hogsback. Carnwnda and Carn Gelli stand out magnificently directly in view just to the left of Fishguard Bay. Professor Alexander Thom surveyed Parc-y-Meirw and declared that the stones were a lunar alignment utilising Mount Leinster across the Irish Sea. Legend has it that a White Lady is often seen around the stones of Parc-y-Meirw.

The Bigger View from Parc-y-Meirw
[illegible]
I want to go down to the field of the Dead
[illegible]
I want to sit down in the Field of the Dead
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

NOTES AT PARC-Y-MEIRW STONE ALIGNMENT, DINAS CROSS: 15TH JULY 1995 CE

It's hard for me to write, these stones have got me so high. They are set into a wall in the most exquisite setting, deep views down the coast yet in the magical thrall of the disturbing Mynydd Diwas, a huge massif to the north out of which rises the equally daunting rocky tor called Carn Fawr… It's the size of these stones which is so impressive. Though two of them are now gateposts, it's clear that agriculture had to accommodate them rather than the other way around. At the north-east corner of the field is a sad clearance cairn revealing two of the smaller more easily removable stones, but this 'Field of the Dead' is cemented into the landscape with an almighty thoroughness. It's east–west alignment points to a cairn of possible outcrop on the near horizon, a horizon which presents such a wealth of possibilities that it is sickening. There is a face reminiscent of the Sleeping Beauty at Callanish.^{G} And to the south-west, two Mother tits rise up on a mythological distant horizon drowning with possibilities.

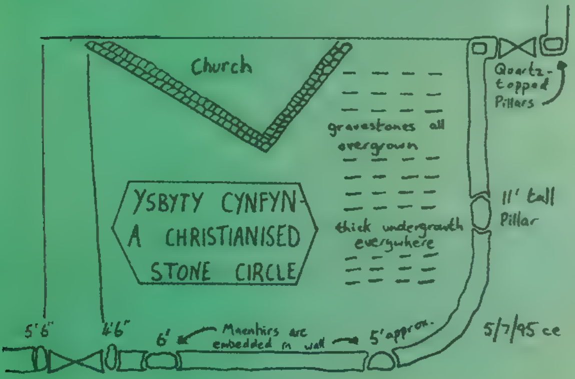
Parc-y-Meirw requires an O.S. map.

4 b) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
135.753792

Ysbytty Cynfyn

The strange churchyard at Ysbytty Cynfyn stands in the heart of a former Pagan centre, as shown by the names of the two towns at either end of the road leading to the church. At one end is Ponterwyd, or 'Bridge of the Druid', whilst at the other end is Devil's Bridge, an even more obvious expression of distaste. Unlike most Welsh circles, the stones of Ysbyty Cynfyn are enormous. Christianising the temple with its walls does little to hide the sheer monumental task of the circle itself – the largest stone still standing is over eleven feet tall, and two more are around five and six feet, whilst even the megalithic church gateposts are large by Welsh standards. The circle is raised from the road, and possibly its embankment would have been continued with the Christianising – as a stone circle, the monument would have been visible from the road like no other Welsh circle, except for Tre'r Drew[G] on Anglesey. It is important to visit Devil's Bridge, where the water of the Afon Rheidol rushes below two strange bridge constructions. Legend has it that the Devil had claimed the soul of the first person to cross the new bridge, but an old woman cheated him by chasing a little dog across ahead of everyone. Hers is a rare example of the 'wise woman' or Hag winning in magic against the Devil. (See page 145 for further photograph.)


Church
gravestones all overgrown
thick undergrowth everywhere
YSBYTY CYNFYN – A CHRISTIANISED STONE CIRCLE
Quartz-topped Pillars
11' tall Pillar
5'6"
4'6"
6'
Maenhirs are embedded in wall
5' approx.
5/7/95 ce

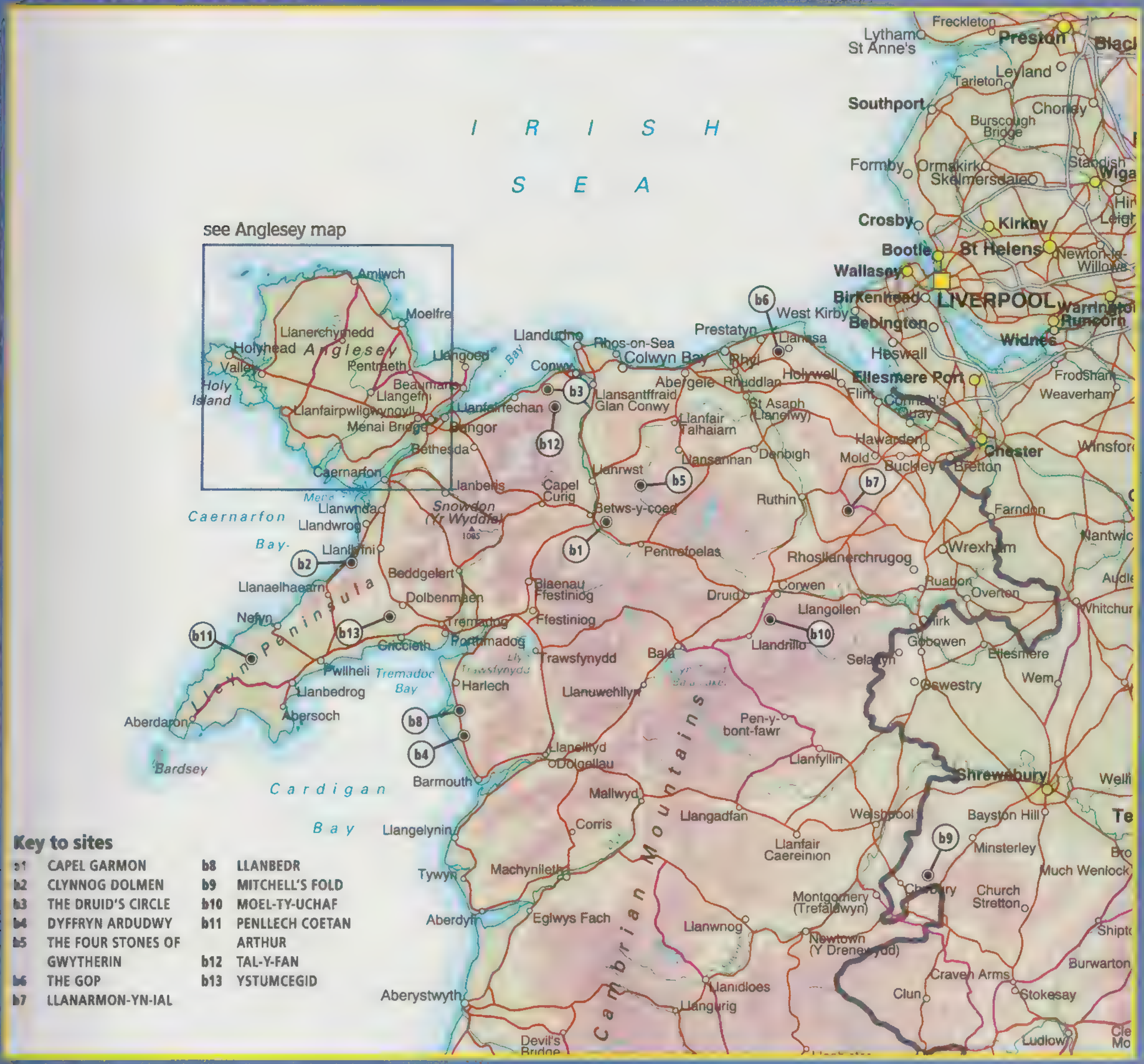
NOTES AT YSBYTTY CYNFYN, BETWEEN PONTERWYD AND DEVIL'S BRIDGE: 15TH JULY 1995 CE

Ha, I'm finally at this famous Pagan centre surrounded by the dangerous beauty of the Afon Rheidol Valley, all sides creating a fabulous setting for this one magnificent circle. I climbed up behind the church to get a grasp of the stone circle's remarkable position – really, with its proximity to the river and the enormous outcrop of rock, it makes perfect sense that Ysbytty Cynfyn is situated equal distance between Devil's Bridge and Ponterwyd (Bridge of the Druid). Surely this north-north-easterly valley was once a huge Pagan centre. By Christianising in such a perfunctory manner, the remains of this classic site are … all the more powerful.

Ysbytty Cynfyn is a solitary unsignposted village on the A4120 between Devil's Bridge and Ponterwyd. It is shown on road atlases, but look out for a low settlement in trees. The church is set back.

five

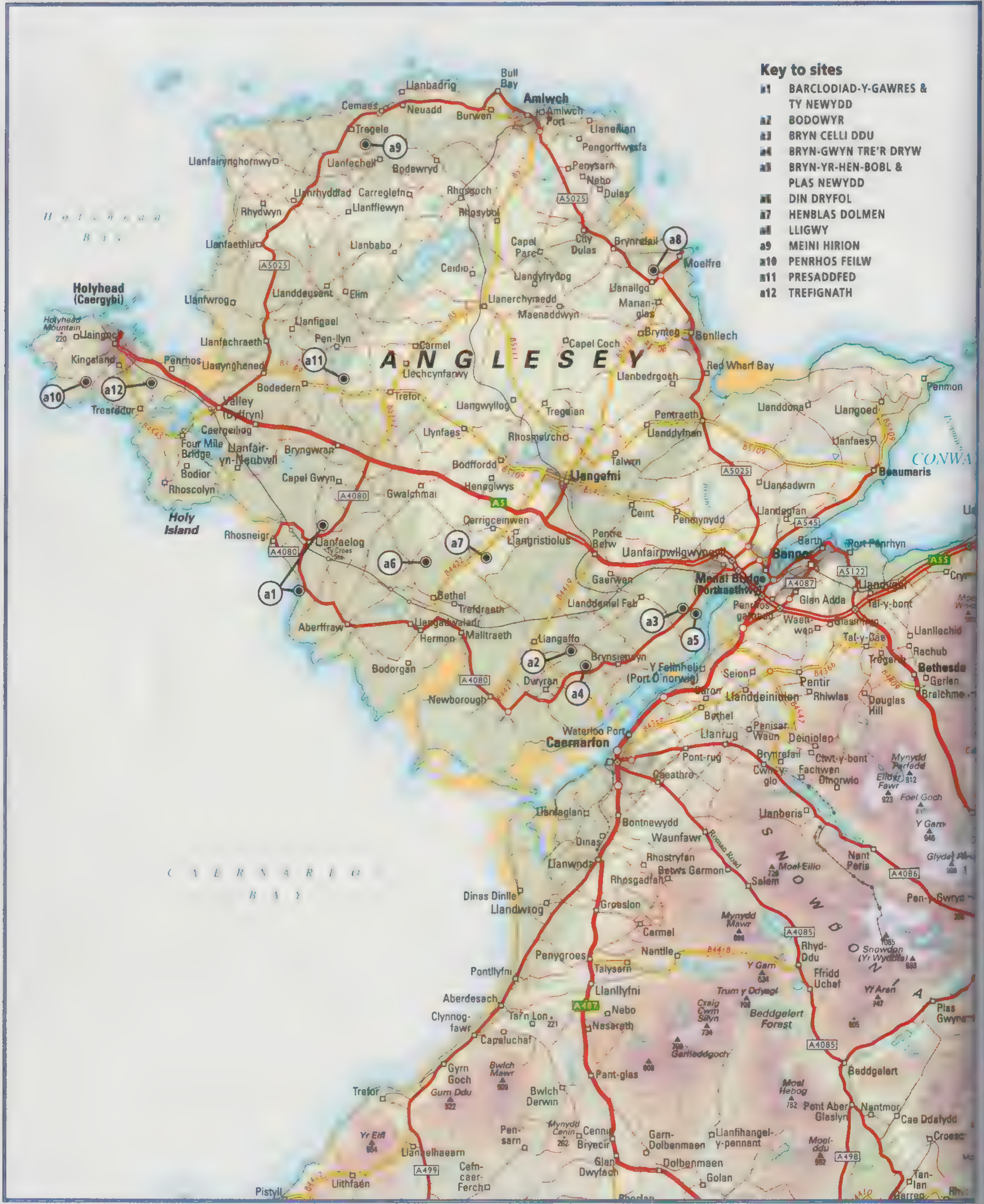
North Wales, Anglesey & the Isle of Man



IRISH SEA
see Anglesey map
Anglesey
Amlwch
Moelfre
Llanerchymedd
Holyhead
Valley
Holy Island
Pentraeth
Llangoed
Beaumaris
Llangefni
Llanfairpwllgwyngyll
Menai Bridge
Bangor
Caernarfon
Caernarfon Bay
Llanwnda
Llandwrog
Llanllyfni
Llanaelhaearn
Nefyn
Lleyn Peninsula
Pwllheli
Llanbedrog
Abersoch
Aberdaron
Bardsey
Cardigan Bay
Tremadoc Bay
Criccieth
Porthmadog
Tremadog
Dolbenmaen
Beddgelert
Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa)
1085
Llanberis
Bethesda
Llanfairfechan
Llandudno
Conwy
Rhos-on-Sea
Colwyn Bay
Llansantffraid Glan Conwy
Capel Curig
Llanrwst
Betws-y-coed
Pentrefoelas
Blaenau Ffestiniog
Ffestiniog
Trawsfynydd
Harlech
Llanuwchllyn
Bala
Llanelltyd
Dolgellau
Barmouth
Llangelynin
Tywyn
Machynlleth
Aberdyfi
Eglwys Fach
Corris
Mallwyd
Llangadfan
Cambrian Mountains
Aberystwyth
Devil's Bridge
Llanidloes
Llangurig
Llanwnog
Newtown (Y Drenewydd)
Montgomery (Trefaldwyn)
Llanfair Caereinion
Welshpool
Llanfyllin
Pen-y-bont-fawr
Prestatyn
Llanasa
Rhyl
Rhuddlan
Abergele
Llanfair Talhaiarn
Llansannan
St Asaph (Llanelwy)
Denbigh
Ruthin
Holywell
Flint
Mold
Hawarden
Buckley
Bretton
Chester
Ellesmere Port
Connah's Quay
Rhosllanerchrugog
Wrexham
Ruabon
Corwen
Llangollen
Druid
Llandrillo
Chirk
Gobowen
Overton
Selattyn
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Wem
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Minsterley
Chirbury
Church Stretton
Much Wenlock
Clun
Craven Arms
Stokesay
Ludlow
Burwarton
West Kirby
Heswall
Bebington
Birkenhead
Wallasey
LIVERPOOL
Bootle
Crosby
St Helens
Kirkby
Formby
Ormskirk
Skelmersdale
Southport
Burscough Bridge
Lytham St Anne's
Freckleton
Preston
Tarleton
Leyland
Chorley
Standish
Widnes
Runcorn
Frodsham
Weaverham
Farndon
Whitchurch
Nantwich
Winsford
b1
b2
b3
b4
b5
b6
b7
b8
b9
b10
b11
b12
b13
Key to sites
b1 CAPEL GARMON
b2 CLYNNOG DOLMEN
b3 THE DRUID'S CIRCLE
b4 DYFFRYN ARDUDWY
b5 THE FOUR STONES OF GWYTHERIN
b6 THE GOP
b7 LLANARMON-YN-IAL
b8 LLANBEDR
b9 MITCHELL'S FOLD
b10 MOEL-TY-UCHAF
b11 PENLLECH COETAN ARTHUR
b12 TAL-Y-FAN
b13 YSTUMCEGID

The uniqueness of the Isle of Man is such that it is included here merely because it is a short section, and because Anglesey and the Isle of Man were both anciently known as Mona.

Anglesey

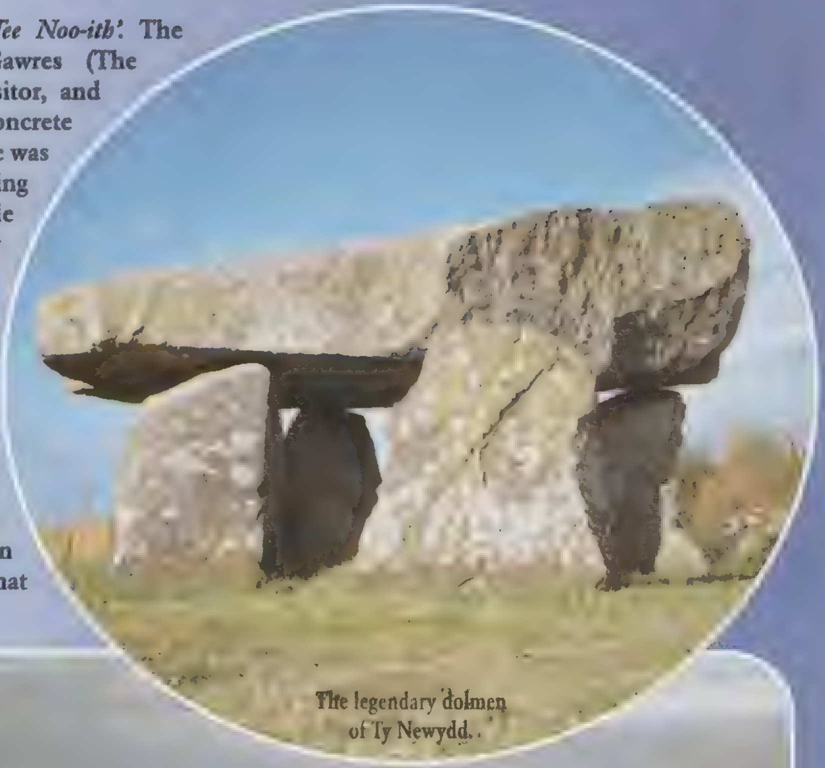

Key to sites
a1 BARCLODIAD-Y-GAWRES & TY NEWYDD
a2 BODOWYR
a3 BRYN CELLI DDU
a4 BRYN-GWYN TRE'R DRYW
a5 BRYN-YR-HEN-BOBL & PLAS NEWYDD
a6 DIN DRYFOL
a7 HENBLAS DOLMEN
a8 LLIGWY
a9 MEINI HIRION
a10 PENRHOS FEILW
a11 PRESADDFED
a12 TREFIGNATH
ANGLESEY
Holyhead Bay
Holyhead (Caergybi)
Holyhead Mountain
220
Holy Island
Caernarfon Bay
Bull Bay
Amlwch
Amlwch Port
Llanbadrig
Cemaes
Neuadd
Burwen
Tregele
Llanfairynghornwy
Llanfechell
Bodewryd
Llanrhyddlad
Carreglefn
Llanfflewyn
Rhydwyn
Rhosgoch
Rhosybol
Llaneilian
Pengorffwysfa
Penysarn
Nebo
Dulas
Llanfaethlu
Llanbabo
Capel Parc
City Dulas
Brynrefail
Moelfre
Ceidio
Llangyfrydog
Llanallgo
Llanerchymedd
Maenaddwyn
Marian-glas
Llanddeusant
Elim
Llanfwrog
Llanfigael
Pen-llyn
Carmel
Capel Coch
Brynteg
Benllech
Llanfachraeth
Llanynghenedl
Penrhos
Kingsland
Trearddur
Llechcynfarwy
Bodedern
Trefor
Red Wharf Bay
Llanbedrgoch
Valley (Dyffryn)
Llangwyllog
Tregaian
Pentraeth
Llanddyfnan
Llanddona
Llangoed
Penmon
Caergeiliog
Four Mile Bridge
Llanfair-yn-Neubwll
Bryngwran
Llynfaes
Rhosmeirch
Llanfaes
Bodior
Rhoscolyn
Capel Gwyn
Bodffordd
Talwrn
Llangefni
Beaumaris
Gwalchmai
Heneglwys
Llansadwrn
Rhosneigr
Llanfaelog
Ty Croes Stn
Cerrigceinwen
Ceint
Penmynydd
Llandegfan
Llangristiolus
Pentre Berw
Llanfairpwllgwyngyll
Garth
Port Penrhyn
Bangor
Aberffraw
Bethel
Trefdraeth
Gaerwen
Menai Bridge (Porthaethwy)
Glan Adda
Llandygai
Tal-y-bont
Llangadwaladr
Hermon
Malltraeth
Llanddaniel Fab
Penrhos-garnedd
Waen-wen
Glasinfryn
Llanllechid
Tal-y-Cae
Rachub
Bodorgan
Llangaffo
Brynsiencyn
Y Felinheli (Port Dinorwic)
Tregarth
Bethesda
Gerlan
Braichmelyn
Newborough
Dwyran
Seion
Pentir
Rhiwlas
Llanddeiniolen
Douglas Hill
Waterloo Port
Caernarfon
Bethel
Penisarwaun
Deiniolen
Llanrug
Pont-rug
Brynrefail
Clwt-y-bont
Mynydd Perfedd
Cwm-y-glo
Fachwen
Dinorwig
Elidir Fawr 923
Foel Goch
Caeathro
Llanberis
Y Garn 946
Llanfaglan
Bontnewydd
Dinas
Waunfawr
Roman Road
Glyder Fawr
Llanwnda
Rhostryfan
Betws Garmon
Moel Eilio 726
Nant Peris
Rhosgadfan
Salem
SNOWDONIA
Dinas Dinlle
Llandwrog
Groeslon
Pen-y-Gwryd
Mynydd Mawr 698
Carmel
Nantlle
Rhyd-Ddu
Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) 1085
Penygroes
Talysarn
Y Garn 634
Ffridd Uchaf
Pontllyfni
Llanllyfni
Trum y Ddysgl 709
Yr Aran 747
Aberdesach
Clynnog-fawr
Tarn Lon 221
Nebo
Craig Cwm Silyn 734
Beddgelert Forest
Plas Gwynant
Nasareth
Capeluchaf
Garnedd-goch 700
Gyrn Goch
Bwlch Mawr 509
Pant-glas
Beddgelert
Trefor
Gurn Ddu 522
Bwlch Derwin
Moel Hebog 782
Pont Aberglaslyn
Nantmor
Cae Ddafydd
Yr Eifl 564
Llanaelhaearn
Pen-sarn
Mynydd Cenin 262
Cennin
Bryncir
Garn-Dolbenmaen
Llanfihangel-y-pennant
Moel-ddu 552
Croesor
Cefn-caer-Ferch
Glan Dwyfach
Dolbenmaen
Golan
Tan-lan
Garreg
Pistyll
Llithfaen
Rhoslan
CONWY
A5025
A5
A4080
A545
A5122
A4087
A4086
A4085
A487
A499
A498
B5109
B4419
B4422
B4545
B5111
B5112
B4366
B4547
B4418
B4421
B4112
B5110
B5108

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.(BAR)328707/(TY NEWYDD)345738

Barclodiad-y-Gawres & Ty Newydd

Pronounced 'Barclod-eye-add ub Gowrez/Tee Noo-ith'. The incredible position of Barclodiad-y-Gawres (The Giantess' Apronful) blows away the visitor, and even distracts them from the terrible concrete dome that 'protects' the restoration. There was a strange suspicious-looking foam blowing across us from the rocks below, a horrible detergent foam. In all of Britain, I've only ever seen similar stuff on the sea bridge along the toll road to Harlech, just south of Porthmadog. Pale orange. Yummy.

North-east in pasture, the famous Ty Newydd dolmen is now sad and disappointing. This formerly beautiful dolmen was particularly archetypal until the capstone snapped and it underwent a ridiculous troubleshooter restoration, to the point of almost destroying any reason to see it. See it anyway, but understand that my photo is a sham.


The legendary dolmen of Ty Newydd..

WINDSWEPT NOTES AT BARCLODIAD-Y-GAWRES, ANGLESEY: 6TH MARCH 1994 CE

I'm sitting on top of the concrete dome that covers this incredible tomb. Weird foam from the sea sprays us and lunatics in sea canoes do battle with the surf, most failing to even leave the safety of the cove, though safe is not a word for the sea today… But the position of Barclodiad-y-Gawres is stupendous. I can see for miles around … and the surf of white horses starts way way out… It's impossible to stand on the top of this mound; it's not easy just sitting here…

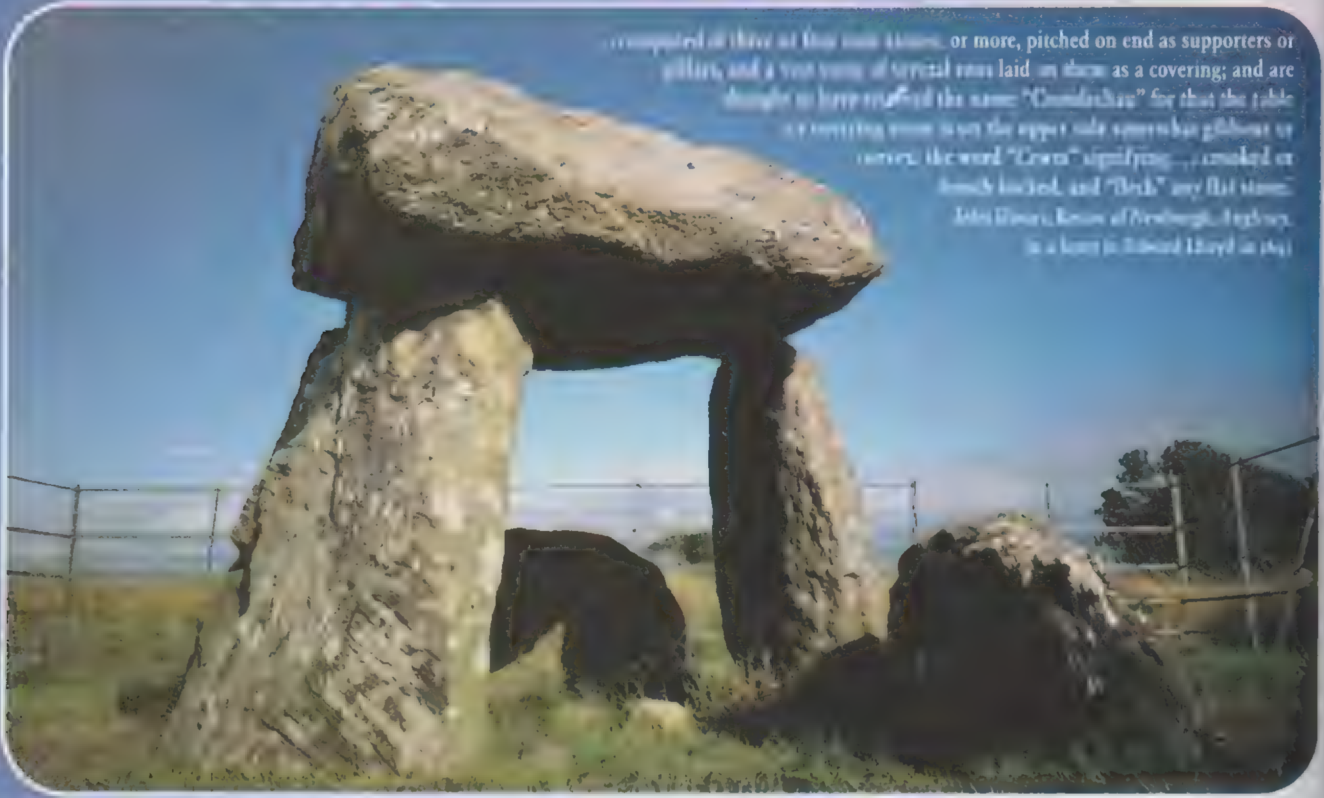
DISAPPOINTED NOTES AT TY NEWYDD, ANGLESEY: 6TH MARCH 1994 CE

Tragically, the great capstone has split! A horrible mending has been achieved with concrete and brick, so clearly inappropriate that it's visible from the road 200 yards away. The cromlech is extremely low whilst the capstone is fabulous. How sad I am that this place has fallen… This weather is tricky, hard to stand up in and pushing me back to the car any minute now. Ty Newydd is a place of sad genius.

Barclodiad-y-Gawres is signposted and visible for miles on the headland between Aberffraw and Llanfaelog. For Ty Newydd, take the first left north out of Llanfaelog towards Capel Gwyn and Bryngwran. After a half mile, scour the fields to your right – Ty Newydd is set back but obvious.

Bodowyr

Pronounced 'Bod-owe-er'. This tiny perfect dolmen stands on a gentle east-facing slope towards the majesty of Snowdonia, in a wide open field of gently breathtaking beauty. Before its mound was removed and its cairn contents scattered, this Neolithic temple was an example of a passage-grave, versions of which are found all over Ireland and even in Brittany. The intense centuries of agriculture have levelled the ground to remove all traces of the mound. This is as dainty a dolmen as you will ever find, beaten, only because of its more colourful setting, by the Poet's Stone (Maen-y-Bardd) on Tal-y-Fan.ᴳ The capstone is like the head of a mushroom and is supported by three stones which define the shape of the original polygonal chamber. The first time we visited in 1994 CE, the field was inhabited by Ynys Mon attack sheep, who head-butted the air as soon as we entered the field. I eventually drove them away through sheer belligerence, but they hassled us all through our visit. On the last visit during summer 1996 CE, the field was in wheat and the setting of the dolmen was perfect. Just as the Severn–Cotswold barrows defined the truncated female form, so the original mound of this dolmen once defined the body of the landscape Goddess, for the name Bodowyr transliterates as 'the body or existence of Ur', literally 'Bod O'Ur'.



> ...composed of three or four huge stones, or more, pitched on end as supporters or pillars, and a vast stone of several tons laid on them as a covering; and are thought to have received the name "Cromlechau" for that the table or covering stone is on the upper side somewhat gibbous or convex, the word "Crwm" signifying ... crooked or bowed, and "llech" any flat stone.
>
> John Davies, Rector of Newborough, Anglesey, in a letter to Edward Lhuyd in 1693

CAMBRIAN ATTACK SHEEP NOTES FROM BODOWYR CROMLECH, ANGLESEY: 7TH MARCH 1994 CE

As we crossed the field ... the sheep faced us off and refused to back down. I muttered a few complaints in an officious tone and we were off, making for the sanctuary of the farm railings that keep everything out. But as we crossed the No Man's Land, the sheep brazened it out and I felt like the police at a hippy festival. Bodowyr is a spectacular cromlech despite its size. Like Poulnabrone in western Ireland, it is tiny yet possesses a supreme spirit. The capstone is vital, the uprights powerful, the whole thing a space megalith and mini-Pentre Ifan.ᴳ Yet it is tiny – a perfect miniature. The sheep are far away now and further off to the east is the vast cloud-veiled dark massif of Snowdonia. This field is wholly unprotected and the west wind which is beginning to blow off my face is responsible for all the witchy trees along the road, their branches distorted by years of growing into the prevailing wind. Three uprights, one blocking stone shot through with quartz. I'm leaning against the heaviest upright. It is zinging my back, a strange gentle electric charge like feet at the onset of pins and needles. *Note*: Capstone shot throughout with quartz underneath.

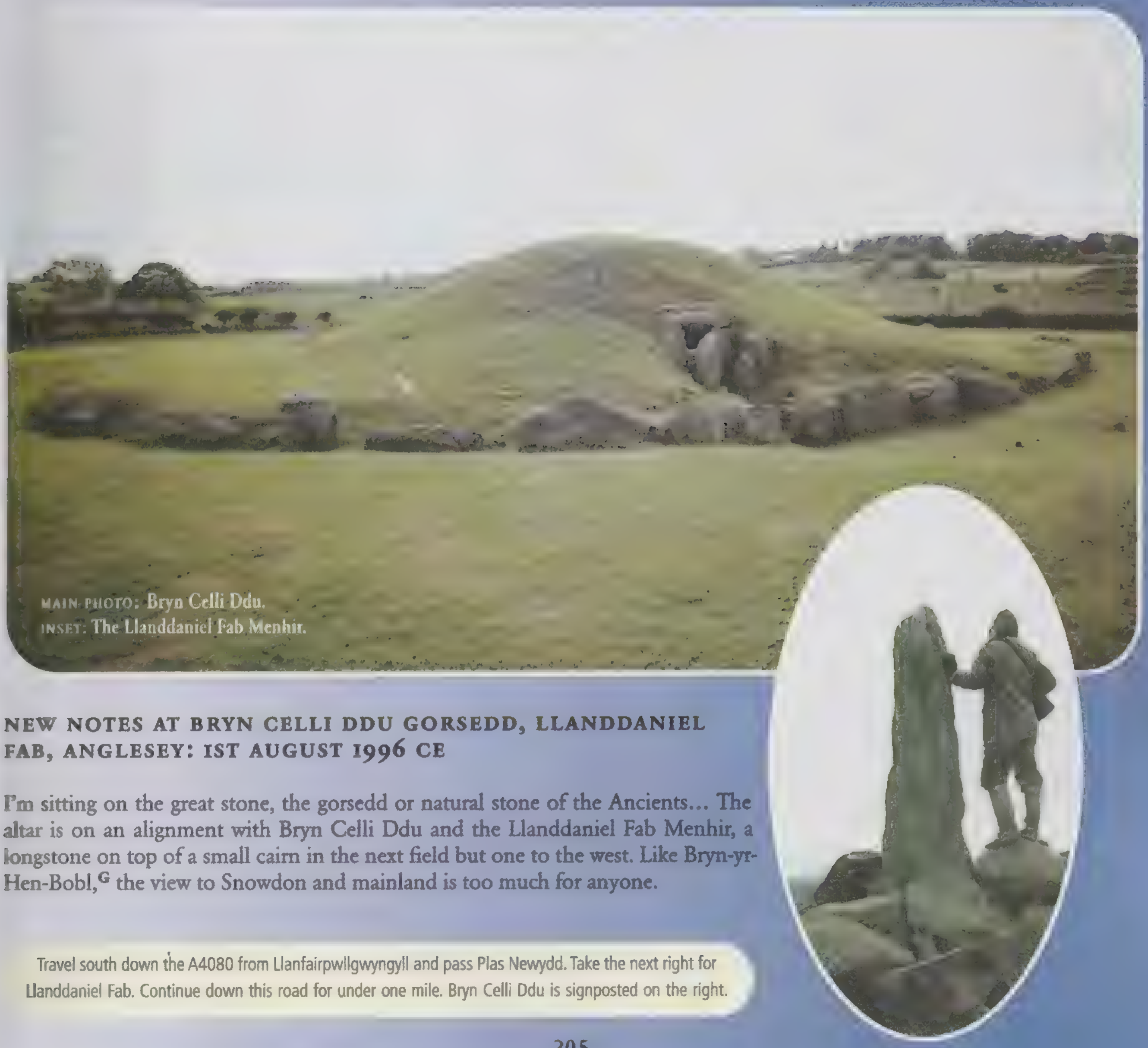
Bodowyr is difficult to find with an O.S. map. It is shown on some road atlases – try the map in this book, but give yourself time. Remember, the dolmen is fairly tiny.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.(BRYN)507507/(LLAND)503703

5 a) 3

Bryn Celli Ddu

Pronounced 'Brin Kethlee Thee (Anglicised approx.)'. The great chambered cairn of Bryn Celli Ddu stands in its own ritual landscape overlooked by the vast mystery of Snowdonia. A direct translation of its name is impossible, but it suggests 'the mound in the grove of the deity'. The origins of worship clearly began at the nearby gorsedd or throne, a great outcrop of rock 200 yards to the north-west. Climbing to the top of this giant reveals smooth evidence of weathering at its most prominent point and there is a small standing stone 200 yards to the south in the same field. To the north-west is the Llanddaniel Fab Menhir, a prominent standing stone surrounded by a large modern cairn of field-clearance stones which is orientated to create an alignment through the gorsedd to Bryn Celli Ddu. The great mound itself was erected over a small circle-henge, an uncommon destruction but not a unique act. The great Cairnpapple^{G} site near Edinburgh suffered similar reconstruction throughout its long life. Most of the stones of the Bryn Celli Ddu circle were removed before this was done, but one large smooth pillar remains within the furthest chamber. There was once a wonderful carved stone standing at the entrance to the mound but this has now been removed to the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, where it stands meaninglessly. A dreadful cast imitation has been erected, which would have achieved slightly more harmony were it not the colour of cream putty. The site was first broken into under cover of night in 1699. Men bearing lanterns crept along the passageway to the main chamber where they were scared out of their wits by the single free-standing monolith guarding the chamber like an all-too-tangible ghost.



MAIN PHOTO: Bryn Celli Ddu.
INSET: The Llanddaniel Fab Menhir.

NEW NOTES AT BRYN CELLI DDU GORSEDD, LLANDDANIEL FAB, ANGLESEY: 1ST AUGUST 1996 CE

I'm sitting on the great stone, the gorsedd or natural stone of the Ancients… The altar is on an alignment with Bryn Celli Ddu and the Llanddaniel Fab Menhir, a longstone on top of a small cairn in the next field but one to the west. Like Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl,^{G} the view to Snowdon and mainland is too much for anyone.

Travel south down the A4080 from Llanfairpwllgwyngyll and pass Plas Newydd. Take the next right for Llanddaniel Fab. Continue down this road for under one mile. Bryn Celli Ddu is signposted on the right.

The gorsedd at Bryn Celli Ddu.

HEY, HEY, BRYN CELLI DDU NOTES IN A DRIPPING CHAMBER SURROUNDED BY SHEEP: 7TH MARCH 1994 CE

At last we're all here. Photographs of Bryn Celli Ddu have haunted me for what seems like an age and now it seems that the reality is even greater. The great outcrop to the west is very similar in shape, so much so that on first glimpse I mistook it for the monument. But as we rounded the corner from Llanddaniel Fab, there she was, green and beautiful, far across the fields… There's a long walk … to a quagmire path across the field 100 yards, to the monument. Even in Wellingtons, the March rain makes it almost impossible. But Bryn Celli Ddu will still be here even when all that baloney is long gone. Archaeologists came and took the wonderful carved stones [to a museum] – they'll say, 'Out of harm's way.' I say, 'Who says?' If they took all the carved stones out of the Irish monuments they'd be earth heaps with nothing at all inside. But the views at Bryn Celli Ddu are pastoral and gentle and infinitely amazing. The standing stone remaining in the chamber, a tall thin pillar, is a bizarre reminder of this place's utilitarian history. The sacred hill and the standing stone just beyond probably belong to the henge period, the banks now undefined in all but the north edge which appears as a ridged bump when seen from the top of the mound. The views are tight all around, possibly perfect as a natural amphitheatre, with long views only to the south-west, where the mountains of Snowdonia are revealed between the gentle hills of the very near horizon. Bryn Celli Ddu is a place to stay for a very long time, eat a picnic, hang out in the chamber and marvel at the whole unfolding history of great worship under the stars, the planets, the sun and the moon.

A view of Bryn Celli Ddu looking across the gorsedd.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.466671/463669

5 a) 4

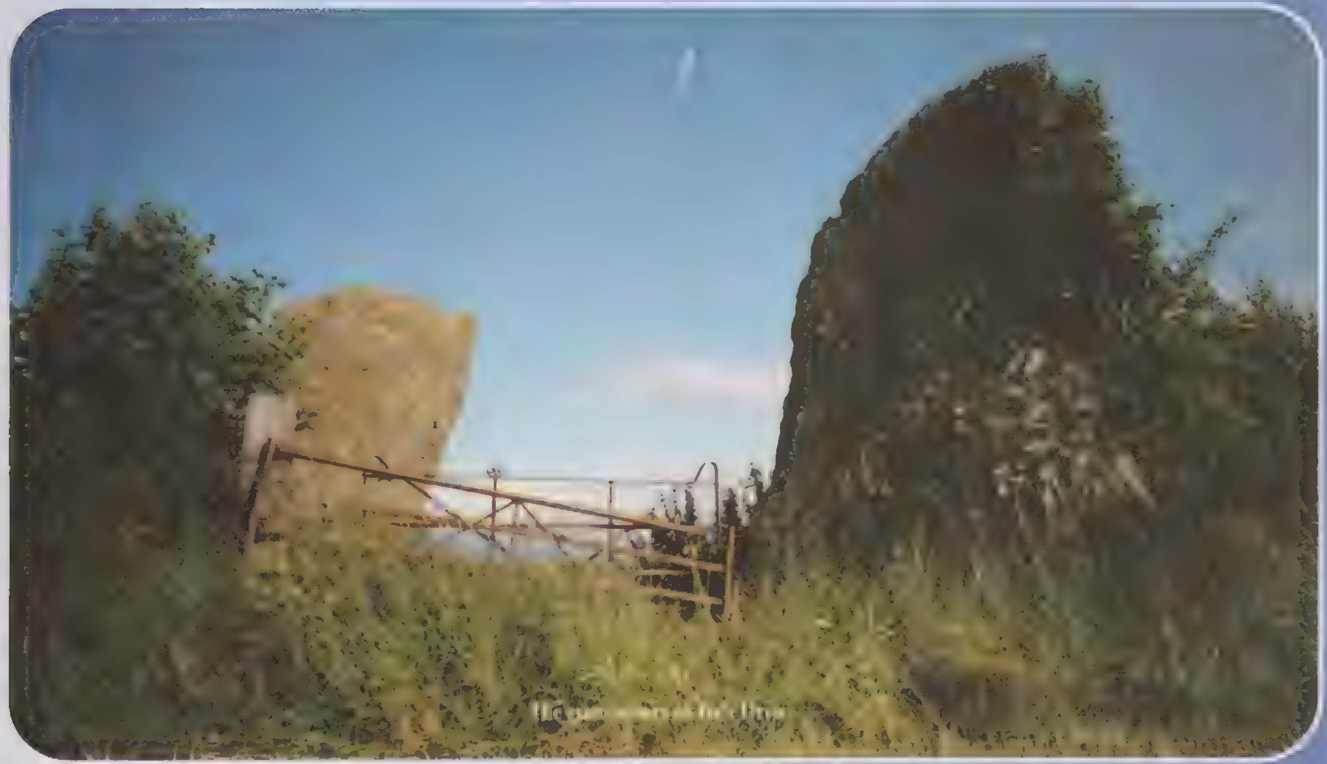
Bryn-Gwyn Tre'r Dryw

Pronounced 'Brin Gwin Trair Droo'. In pouring rain and tight visibility, the bank of Bryn-Gwyn is very impressive; it is much harder this way to make out the farmhouse, which was built in 1872 into a levelled area of the henge. Before this recent act of tragic vandalism, the tenant farmer could see the original entrance to the monument. As usual with these low-lying earthworks, it is difficult to imagine them as predominantly defensive, as was thought for many years, but it is now known that the monument's root was as a Neolithic henge in the Stonehenge^{G} tradition with an outer rather than an inner ditch. Here, cutting through the two farms of Bryn-Gwyn and Tre'r Dryw, was once an epically long Neolithic ceremonial complex, the henge in the north leading south via an avenue to a huge circle of wall-size stones in a wide circular earthworks at Tre'r Dryw farm. Only Henry Rowlands had written about these monuments, in his *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* of 1723, so nothing could prepare us for the real form of the stones, and on 12th March '94, I wrote:

> 'As we approached the field, the stones rose out to meet us, as big as Avebury^{G} circle stones* and extraordinary. The two [remaining stones] stand between two field walls and act as megalithic gateposts for a sad and rusted old iron five-bar gate. The incongruity is unbelievable ... and I stood bovine and speechless to find this size of monument on our last day in the field.'

Fortuitously, these two remaining circle stones are side by side, giving a remarkable clue. For the two stones could not be more dissimilar. One is over ten feet tall and round as a big fat boulder. Its top slopes down like a Stenness^{G} stone, though it's about ten times wider. The other stone is a great narrow blade bursting out of the ground to a height of fifteen feet. The two stones are only about sixteen feet apart, yet they appear to define the arc of a small circle. In Henry Rowlands' time, there were two more remaining circle stones, one complete and one almost a stump. Rowlands said that the arc created suggested a circle only forty feet across, which would make it quite sensational and preposterous. Only something within the realm of a Stenness or Stonehenge, or even the equally imbalanced temple of white quartz, at Duloe,^{G} south of Bodmin Moor. Such a monument, when linked to the henge at Bryn-Gwyn, clearly marks this as a major ceremonial centre. Unfortunately, both Henry Rowlands and William Stukeley attempted reconstructions of the monuments which were so fanciful as to take credibility from other drawings by those artists. But merely standing in the fields of the two farms, with the vast Snowdonia horizon, blasts the senses into vision. Frances Lynch tells of a commissioner for historic monuments who, in 1939, discovered traces of the original bank of the Tre'r Dryw site, but, though I felt able to trace the ditch and bank at the south-eastern area, I felt that an aerial shot would be necessary for fieldwalking such a destroyed site.

* Returning in summer '96 CE, I was pleased to discover that these stones are indeed as enormous as I thought. The best size approximation is with the Barber's Stone at Avebury.



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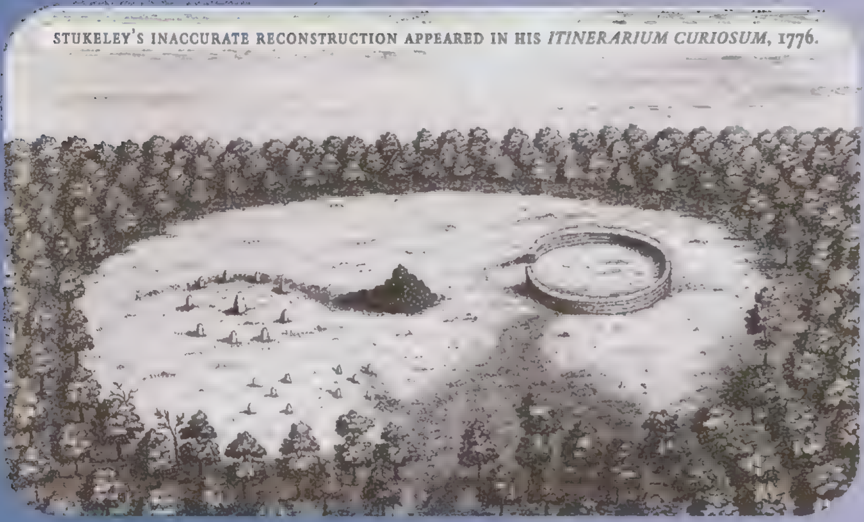
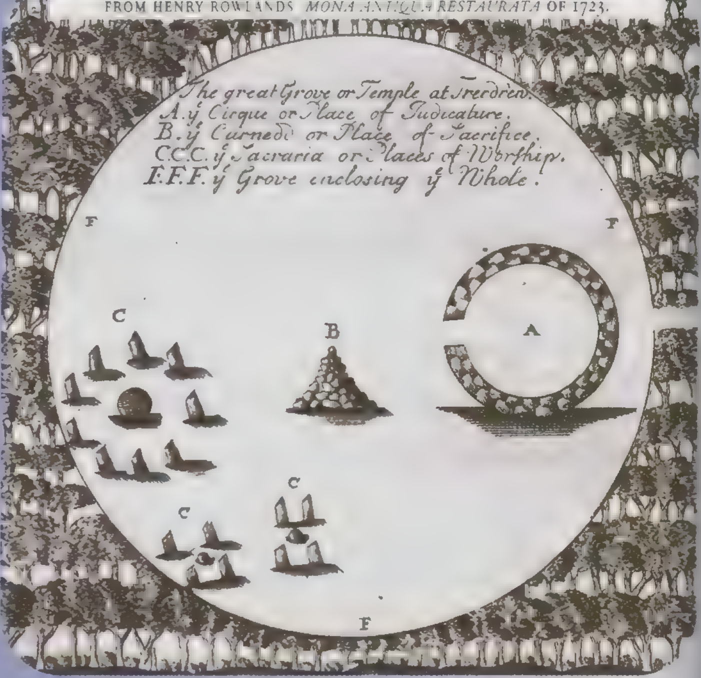
STUKELEY'S INACCURATE RECONSTRUCTION APPEARED IN HIS *ITINERARIUM CURIOSUM*, 1776.



NOTES BENEATH THE GREAT STONES, BRYN-GWYN TRE'R DRYW, ANGLESEY: 11 A.M., 12TH MARCH 1994 CE

Today, the snowy peaks of beautiful Snowdonia are semi-covered in a great curtain of cloud. The wind creaks the branches of the trees like the unmanned masts of the *Marie Celeste*, and I sit at the foot of these enormous megalithic 'gateposts'. It's difficult to explain the size and bulk of these stones – perhaps those used to Wessex monuments will be able to imagine it. But these two are also outrageously different from each other. The great female stone is over twenty-two feet in girth yet only ten feet high. The male stone is a sharp sky-reaching blade over fifteen feet tall but only fifteen inches at its widest. Today, the crop-marks of the possible henge are easily discernible. They can be traced on either side of the field wall on which the two stones stand and it's easy to follow the eyeline all the way around. But earthwork or no, the great stones are a bizarre and gorgeous monument with or without its former brothers and sisters. Just to the north-east is the ancient Castell Bryn-Gwyn, a likely henge in the Stonehenge tradition. It's an easy walk from here to the earthwork, through a small farmyard of barking dogs and into a field full of new lambs. Nothing can be seen of the stones of Tre'r Dryw, but once there was a great alignment of Neolithic temples. These huge stones are covered in green lichen, but the fat female stone is almost entirely made of white quartz, a great seam of rose quartz permeating the lower side nearest its field wall bank. In comparison, the great phallic fifteen-feet blade is a boring granity stone. But ultimately, the peace of this place drives me wild. I want to stay here forever. Since accidentally coming across the stones after yesterday's preliminary exploration, they both seem like a crazy and extremely important part of Anglesey's history.

FROM HENRY ROWLANDS' *MONA ANTIQUA RESTAURATA* OF 1723.


The great Grove or Temple at Trerdrew.
A. yᵉ Cirque or Place of Judicature.
B. yᵉ Carnedd or Place of Sacrifice.
C.C.C. yᵉ Sacraria or Places of Worship.
F.F.F. yᵉ Grove enclosing yᵉ Whole.
F
F
C
B
A
C
C
F

Bryn-Gwyn is signposted at a farm to the right, on the A4080 south, just over a mile out of Brynsiencyn. At Bryn-Gwyn, take the footpath west across to the next farm and ask to see the stones.

The henge known as Bryn-Gwyn is horribly ploughed, its rare outer ditch almost all silted up.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.(BRYN-YR-HEN-BOBL)519689/(PLAS NEWYDD)520697

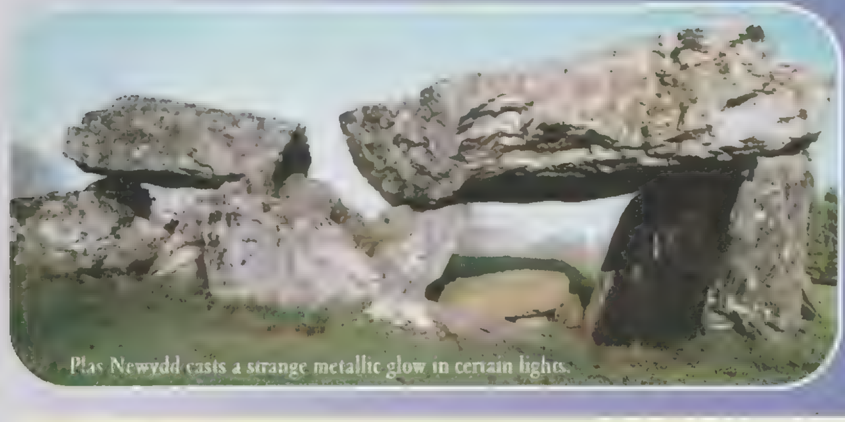
5 a) 5

Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl & Plas Newydd Dolmen

Pronounced 'Brinner'n'Bobble/Plazz Noo-Ith'. Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl, 'The Hill of the Old People', is like a mini Newgrange as it was before restoration – overgrown, mysterious and neglected in a visited sort of way. The enormous east-facing mound is bizarre – a kidney-shaped thing with a much ploughed-out phallic mound projecting approximately south. Nowadays, the great east-facing entrance to the chamber is all but blocked up. A low crawl will allow a maximum of eight feet of egress, but W. J. Kemp's excavations of 1925 and their accompanying well-intentioned wooden railings are all blown down into a tangled mess. The specially made concrete sockets which formerly held a wooden fence are rotten, having never been painted or even creosoted. Even the capstone, which is a remarkable thing, has split two thirds of the way back. Sixty years ago, a vision was begun and never finished, but the strange juxtaposition of time here is remarkable, from our first visit three years ago, through the archaeologists of the '30s, all the way back 2,000 years to the Romans and Druids, all obsessed with a 5,000-year-old temple. Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl still has the heart of modern Angleseyfolk – one landowner told us of a 'gigantic representation of a phallus in the grounds of Plas Newydd'. More strangely, it is truly here. Close to the car park is Plas Newydd, a funny monster which stands in the grounds of the huge Plas Newydd country house, about fifty paces from the front door, a formidable and atypical antiquarian conceit carried out with such class that antiquaries argued for many years that it was a folly. But it is not.

NOTES FROM BRYN-YR-HEN-BOBL, OVERLOOKING THE MENAI STRAITS, ANGLESEY: 8TH MARCH 1994 CE

[illegible] Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl.


Plas Newydd casts a strange metallic glow in certain lights.

I'm sitting at the forecourt entrance to the enormous mound, the wind blowing up a storm and thick constant towers of fast-moving low cloud bales overhead from the south-west. It was on these shores that the Druids made their final stand against the onslaught of the approaching Roman Legions almost 2,000 years ago. For most of the battle, wailing women stood on these shores, their tradition already over 3,000 years old even then. They were not willing to easily give up this magical kingdom, forced as they were into the very last corner of Brythonic lands by shaven robots run by a technocratic death system… To sit in this wind on this demented ridge is to feel the millennia peel away in easy stages, and Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl opens up before me in one trumpet blast from our distant past.

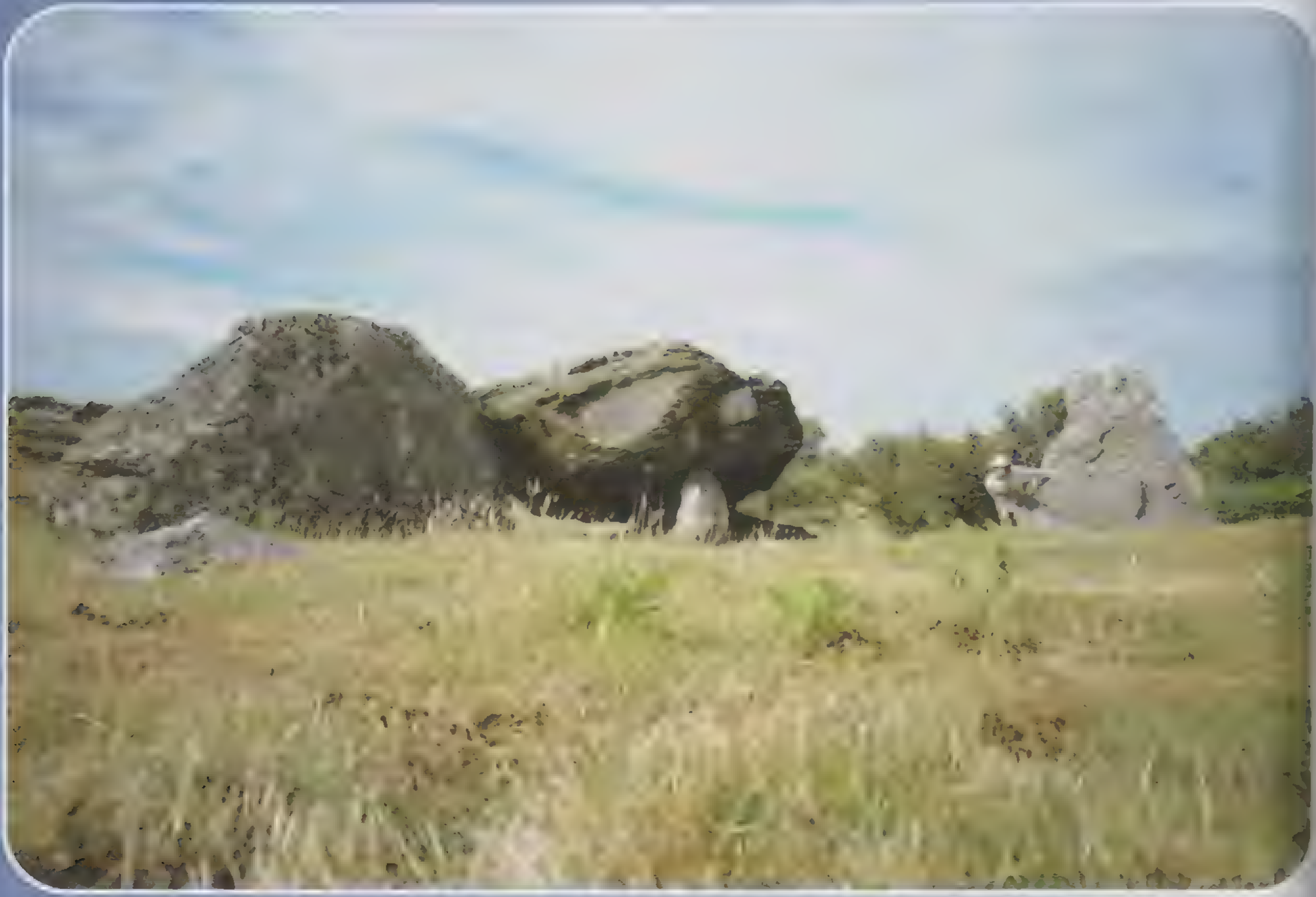
Plas Newydd is signposted to the right, off the A4080 from Brynsiencyn to Llanfairpwllgwyngyll. Ask permission and directions for Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl.

5 a) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.396724

Din Dryfol

Pronounced 'Din drivvle'. Standing in the grounds of Fferam Rhosydd, north-east of Soar, Din Dryfol is a fabulous site utilising the natural resources of the area to produce an epic achievement. All of the cairn is now gone, revealing a long linear outcrop of stone which acted as a retaining kerb to keep the former cairn in place. Din Dryfol stands in the lea of a special and mound-like hill overlooking the valley of the Afon Gwna (pronounced 'Gooner', the 'oo' as in 'book'). Arriving at the monument, the traveller is confronted by a huge flat slablike standing stone very similar to that at Tordarroch in Inverness-shire.



DIN DRYFOL, AMAZED NOTES AT THE CENTRE, ANGLESEY: 2ND AUGUST 1996 CE

Surely you cannot be serious, Mother, there must be some kind of mistake, I was freaking enough back at sweet Tre'r Dryw,^{G} but this is taking the cake. How can I roam around on the wrong side of the river only to find as wild a place as this? The standing stone is bigger than all its brothers on the island except beloved Tre'r Dryw, and its placement in a huge cairn reminds me of Uneval^{G} way out on North Uist. Even the slabby easily splitness of it has the same atmosphere. Din Dryfol is in rocky outcrops like Harthill Moor's Nine Stone Close^{G} and the edge of this natural plateau has a kerb of a raised edge all along its length – ideal for the Ancients' incorporating it into the later cairn. The ridge and plateau, with their remarkable conical hill above, were probably one of the Ur-temples of this area. And Din Dryfol is so out of the way that it is imperative everyone should stay for hours and hours.

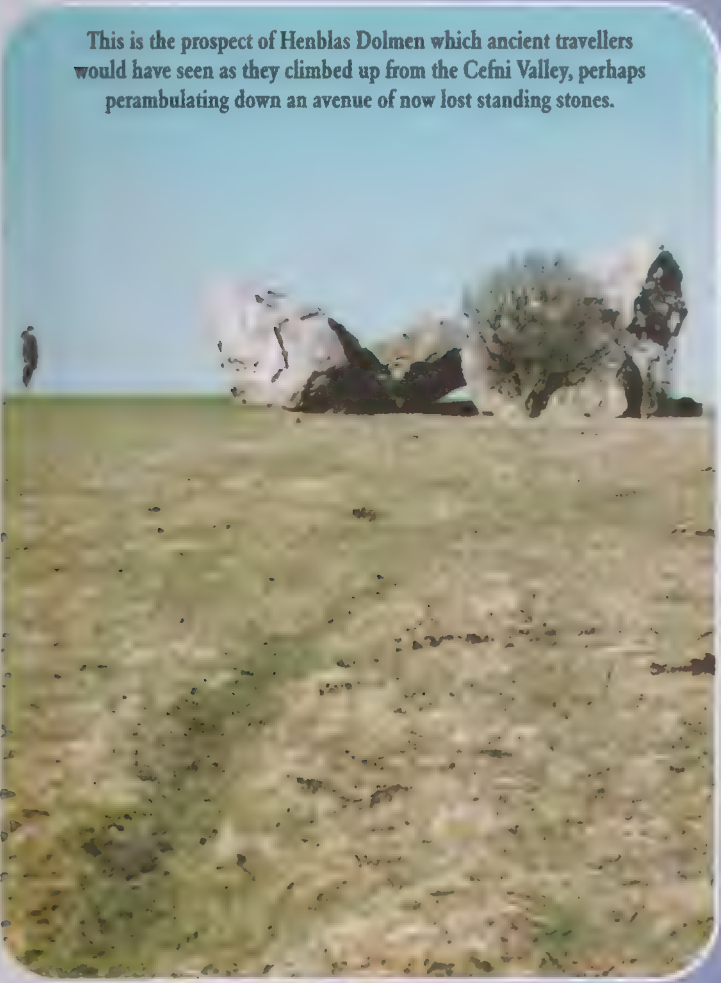
From the village of Soar, travel north-east for less than a mile. Din Dryfol is in the farm on the right.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.426728

5 a) 7

Henblas Dolmen

When I first visited Henblas, it was situated in a sad unused working farm with shadowy corners like some mystery film you turn on halfway through. In the mist on the near horizon were three stones so large I thought I was hallucinating. They floated so large as to be like clouds. In *Prehistoric Anglesey*, Frances Lynch writes that: 'It seems clear that there were originally other stones … and that in removing these an urn containing burnt bones and a ring of blue glass was found… They are a very remarkable phenomenon which must have attracted the … admiration of a people used to setting up … large stone monuments.' Malcolm Innes, owner of Henblas, told me about a local legend that an avenue of stones once linked Henblas Dolmen with the Afon Cefni, the river which flows along the broad valley floor to the east of the monument. I did not get to check out his comments with fieldwork until over two years later, and the results were inconclusive, due to modern developments.


This is the prospect of Henblas Dolmen which ancient travellers would have seen as they climbed up from the Cefni Valley, perhaps perambulating down an avenue of now lost standing stones.

DUMBFOUNDED AT HENBLAS, GOBSMACKED NOTE FROM A CONCRETE STILE IN HIGH WIND, ANGLESEY: 8TH MARCH 1994 CE

These three monsters are made of quartz – white, clear and rose quartz. The lichen grows upon them to slightly disguise their extreme beauty, but a more than perfunctory study reveals as big a block of quartz as I've ever seen… Ha, why isn't this place famous? Now it sits mainly forgotten by the scholars and archaeologists … so extraordinarily big!

Henblas is now part of a theme park. It is signposted off the A5 at the B4422 for Bethel.

What of the old White Palace on the Hill?

[illegible]
[illegible]
Henblas Dolmen –
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] the Young, the Wise
[illegible]

Imagine the Fertile pasture
of the Cefni to the west
of the New Day to the east.

A graceful man who walks in rain
(And climbs in [illegible])
Walks with Him across the Sky
And up the avenue of stones
Towards the Mother Temple on the Sun's own hill –
Where She is waiting, waiting
Ever waiting for her Groom
To indulge the great white quartz
The chambers of her womb.

4,000 years the Sun is seen
The people walk
The wheat – it grows
The people Dance
The wheat grows High
Across the fertile Malltraeth plain –

Till Roman Thought at last untamed came
And, seeking to destroy Her,
Banned all mention of Her Name
For the Technocratic Empire rules
Not Only Those Divided
For as their knowledge has increased,
Their Wisdom has subsided.

But what of the old White Palace on the hill?
The old White Palace does remain There Still.

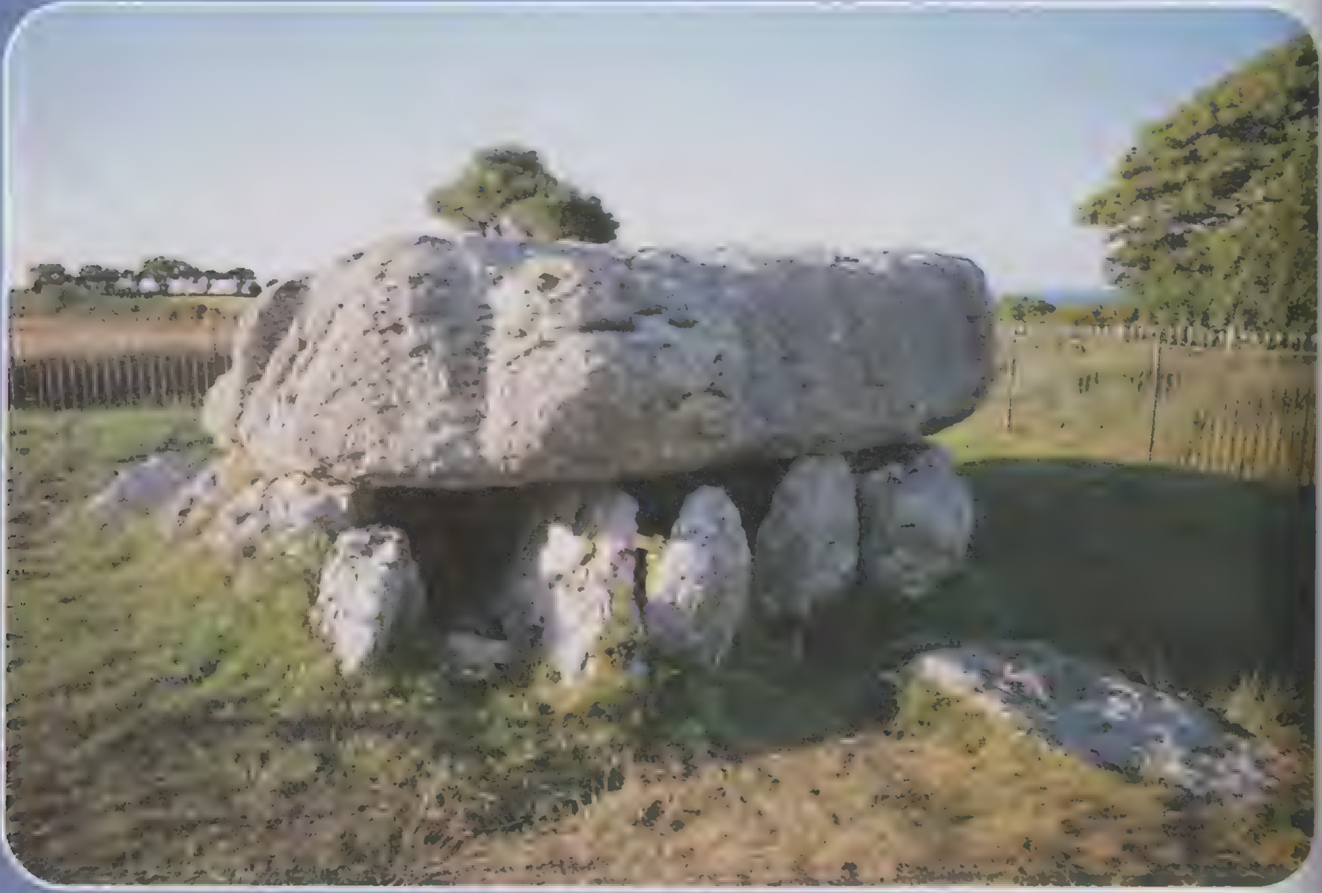
[illegible]
[illegible]

5 a) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.501861

Lligwy

This is the classic megalithic slug. A large natural shelf of rock was dug on one side into a circular pit, creating a low megalithic ritual area and sarcophagus. Then a kerb of low stones was built around the circular pit and shelf, and a huge capstone eighteen feet by fifteen feet was dragged over the excavated area as a roof. In verdant farmland overlooking the sea, the cromlech's perfection is marred by prohibitive invitingly injuresome railings. Take time to look at Din Lligwy, an Iron Age village built over two millennia after the dolmen. It lies in a wood near the dolmen and has the same singular air of construction. Din Lligwy is made up of megalithic huts and walls, very large pieces, as though constructed by sons of the megalith builders. Choose Din Lligwy over Chysauster at the Land's End – the village truly seems to exercise a deep building tradition. There is a story of a fisherman who visited Lligwy dolmen and fell asleep on the megalithic shelf. He dreamed that he was drowning in a stormy sea, when a beautiful maiden rescued him and carried him onto dry land, whereupon she turned into a repulsive witch. The witch gave the fisherman a snakeskin charm which he had to wash out once a year, or face the consequences.



NOTES INSIDE LLIGWY, NEAR MOELFRE, ANGLESEY: 9TH MARCH 1994 CE

As I sit in mud in the low, low chamber … the first rays of sunshine for days are blasting the south-western edge of the chamber. The sludge in the bottom of this wide-open chamber is no problem – there's even a megalithic bed to the right of the entranceway and good weather would suggest a long picnic. I'm horribly affronted by the stupid people who 'look after' this monument. The gate was padlocked and the climb over the sharp green railings was an unnecessary threat, considering most people come here only for absolute peace… The hollowed chamber is … next to the aforesaid megalithic bed and a kerb of heavy squat uprights supports the gargantuan capstone. The beast is singularly lacking in aesthetic appeal, its power all dependent on its furious size and sheer brutal power. The stone is water eroded, creating deep puddles on the roof, like St. Lythans,^{G} whilst the entrance and its cyclopic construction gives an effect similar to the Dwarfie Stane^{G} on Hoy. This is a peaceful rural area, full of retired people and hippies seeking refuge from the city. And Lligwy … squats here at its field edge, a home forever for little people, pilgrims and travellers alike.

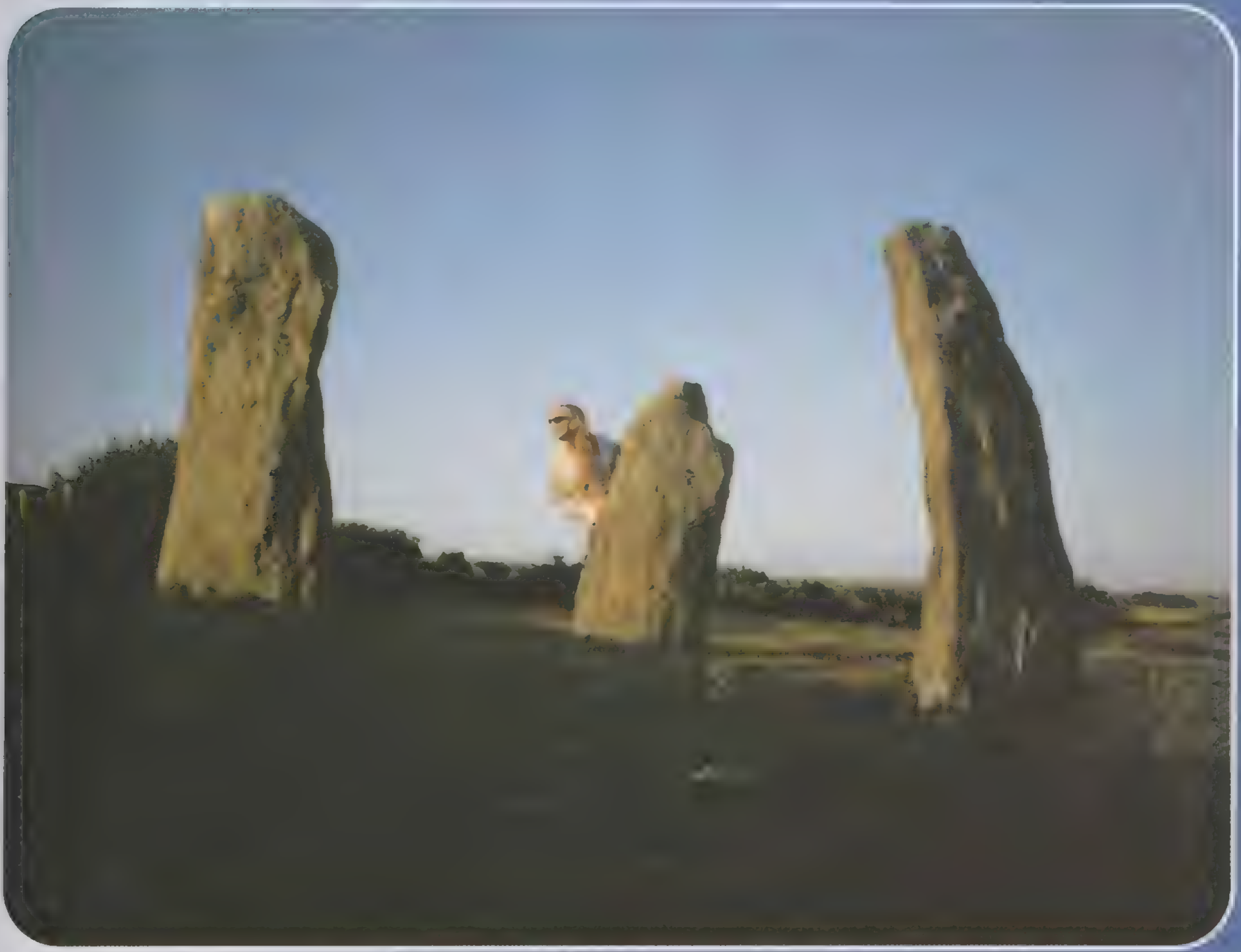
Follow the map in this book. Lligwy is signposted.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.364917

5 a) 9

Meini Hirion

This three-stone setting is visible for miles, standing on a hillock in loosely domesticated farmland. The sheep were heavy and challenged me as I photographed. I have returned over successive years, and the atmosphere is wonderful, though marred visually by the awful buzzing works to the north-west and the strange skyline of telegraph wires. There are white windmills on the north-eastern aspect, which I dig a great deal for the vision they represent. The stones of Meini Hirion remind me of their smaller brothers of the Giant's Grave[G] in Cumbria. Their flat sword-bladed edges point east. One of the stones is a very phallic sabre. It cuts and thrusts out of the ground, smaller than Carreg Lefn five miles to the east but much more genitally shaped. There is a huge chunk of rose quartz by the five-bar gate that leads to the stile. I read somewhere that the farm is called Cromlech, but this is borne out nowhere.



MEINI HIRION NOTES FROM A STILE, NEAR CEMAES, ANGLESEY: 9TH MARCH 1994 CE

I'm thrilled here, [with] this place, the stones and every view. These three beauties, one so phallic that it's funny, remind me of a ruined four-poster, a strange faerie ring, and each stone is special. Again, the [north-eastern] view is dominated by those white windmills and the sea view is ruined by some monstrous industrial plant, but the only moment registering right now is the farmer bringing in his sheep. Over to the south-west the wonderful mountain called Mynydd y Garn sits epic and beautiful, its ridged back undulating to my distant left. It's been our first sunny day today and this north shore of the island is making my head spin … travelling around Britain with such activity allows me to see the sites and form an opinion, rather than seeing one or two, forming an opinion, then seeing a few more and trying to make them fit my theories.

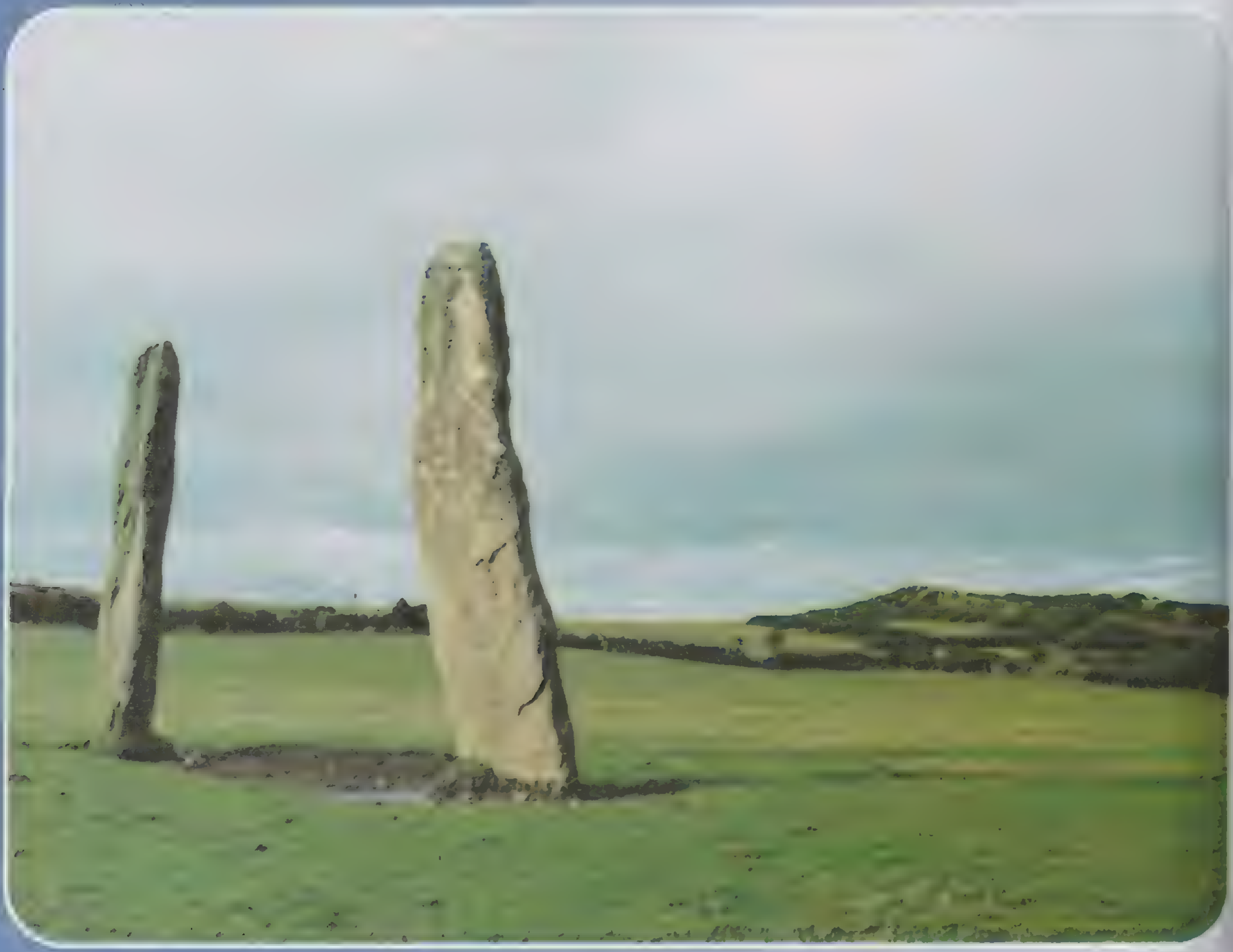
Travel two miles north on the A5025 beyond Llanrhyddlad. Where the main road climbs into a wide right arc, there is a tiny right turn to Llanfechel. Continue along this road until it comes to a larger road. Park. Still facing the direction of the road, the stones are now on the rising pasture behind you at your left.

5 a) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.227809

Penrhos Feilw

These legendary stones are strangely sited, being situated on Ynys Gybi, the holiest part of this holy island, but compromised by telegraph wires and the creeping pre-urbanisation found all over this most sacred part of Anglesey. But the site is utterly tranquil and the nearby farm cottages are deserted, standing on Bodwarren farm, which, like Bodowyr,[G] possibly means 'the Body or being O'Ur'. The stones stand just north of a huge sacred outcrop of rock which may be the 'Bod O'Ur' itself.



NOTES AT PENRHOS FEILW STANDING STONES, HOLYHEAD, ANGLESEY: 7TH MARCH 1994 CE

This gentle morning, I'm sitting on an outcrop of rock overlooking the wonderful bay called Porth Dafarch. A heavy coat of fast-moving pale grey cloud moves across the sky, but each point of the horizon is loaded with blue, except for the view east of the solid landmass which glowers and threatens. Sheep and new lambs were sheltering between the two great stones as we arrived, and the silence was broken by a ridiculous low-flying jet, but now there is the peace of wind and singing birds, though the busy port of Holyhead can be no more than two miles away. Somehow, the peninsula is separate and uncivilised, however many houses and cars there are. It's the uncontrollable nature of Britain's most extreme coasts. We can build on but never truly into the land. Houses perch on cliffs and look ready to be swept away in the blink of an eye. At Penrhos Feilw, the Ancients placed themselves, almo sandwiched themselves, between the lands of the gods. No the sun is bursting out of the cloud and I am in bliss.

NB View is clear down to Rhoscolyn Beacon lighthou Flinton found large deposits of rose and white quartz on the southern outcrop, the stones themselves standing in pastu levelled and reclaimed on three of four sides. On the fourt side are the farm buildings. Major axis NNE.

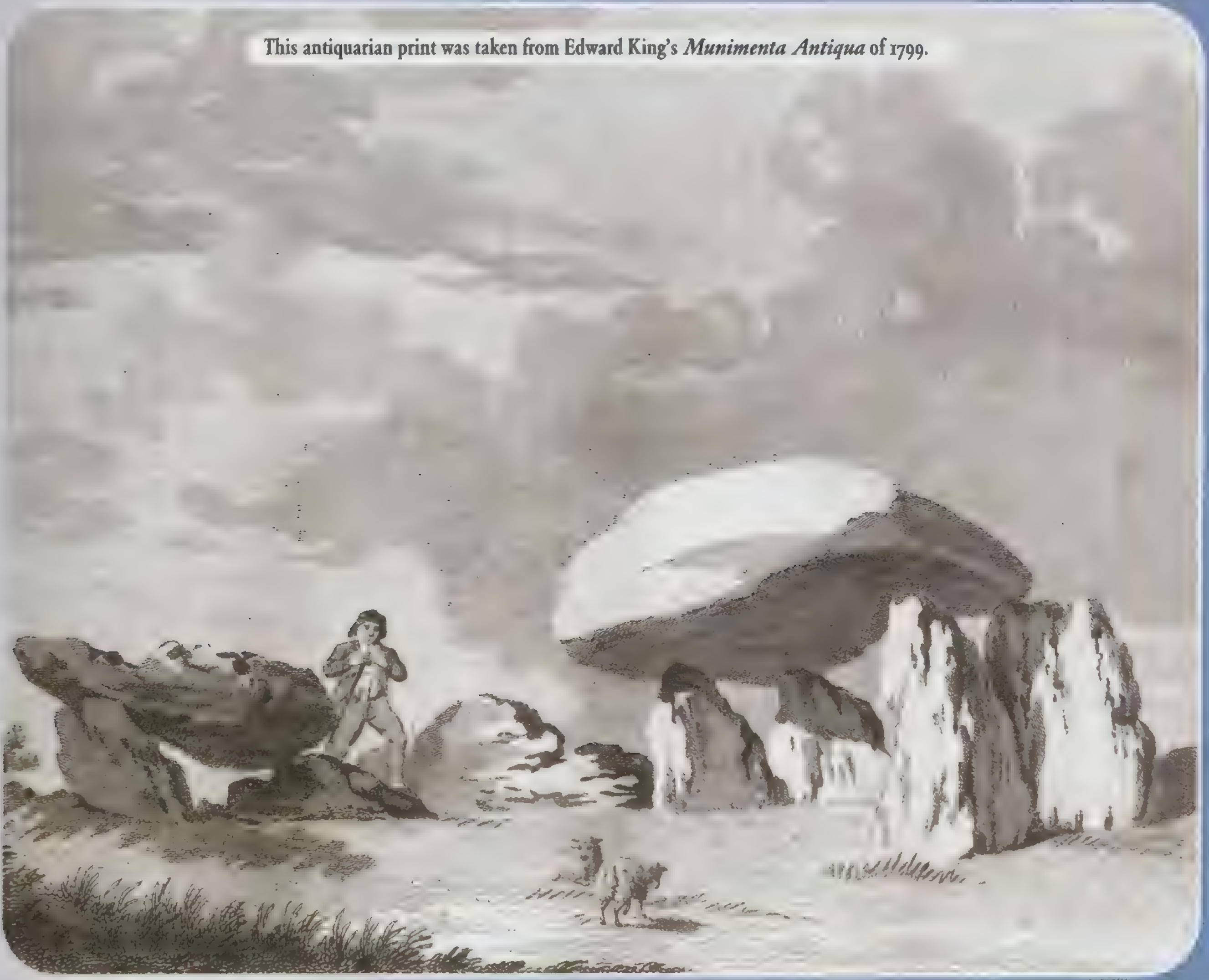
Follow the map. The stones are behind a row of deserted farm cottages.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
114.348808

5 a) 11

Presaddfed

Standing in flat open pasture close to water and surrounded by beautiful landscape, the two dolmens of Presaddfed are an essential but inevitably disappointing curiosity. The land has been ploughed so flat that any sense of their former glory is gone, and they suffer from a Ty Newydd-like^{G} 'restoration' utilising wooden scaffolding. At times, the noise from the nearby kennels is outrageous, yet I've been there when the sunset is as exquisite as anywhere. I suggest an end-of-day visit as the dolmens are west situated and the light will have warmed their surroundings more thoroughly, lending an epically timeless air to sunset over the beautiful nearby lake called Llyn Llywenan.



This antiquarian print was taken from Edward King's *Munimenta Antiqua* of 1799.

NOTES FROM THE CAPSTONE OF THE FALLEN CROMLECH, PRESADDFED, ANGLESEY: 9TH MARCH 1994 CE

This is an evening! A sweet spring evening. And this windblown place is very different from a few days ago. Then, there was as icy a blast as I've had for a while as we crossed over the flat open pasture to those fine burial chambers. Now the evening sun is low over the near trees and a single rowing-boat glints on the squally lake of Llyn Llywenan behind me to the right. Way up to the north, the great magic mountain of Mynydd y Garn presents itself, its ridged backs visible from so many of the monuments on this part of the island. Presaddfed is a very cultivated and pastoral scene. Anglesey has a green serenity like that of Orkney.

From Bodedern, take the B5109 east. At the first left turn, travel towards Llyn Llywenan. Take the first right and pass down a peaceful tree-lined road – the dolmens are visible to your left.

Trefignath

Trefignath is quite superb. There's an aluminium works overpowering its northern aspect and it is heavily restored in that Ty Newydd^G School of Brick & Daub, but keeping that negative anticipation in mind, a day at Trefignath is a blast of life. Arriving from the road, the structure is built onto a superb rocky outcrop, probably the first temple of the area. This then acted as a plinth for a long Severn–Cotswold cairn with the forecourt constructed as a truncated female shape. The capstone stands supported by uprights and a poor bricks and mortar jack at one corner, but the Trefignath stone is vibrant and alive. The remaining long passageway is forty-five feet long and was formerly divided into several chambers, which are now indiscernible. But the raised position of Trefignath leaves every visitor perfectly placed to rain bad vibes down on the aluminium works.

Half a mile to the north-west stands the Maen Hir, a huge standing stone remarkably like a megalithic Druid. Ty Mawr stands in the next field at 254810.

From certain angles, the traveller to Trefignath can almost forget the nearby aluminium plant.

NOTES FROM THE CHAMBER OF THE ROUND CAIRN AT TREFIGNATH, ANGLESEY: 10TH MARCH 1994 CE

I've been worrying about this place for days. As soon as we knew we were finally coming to Anglesey (after many almosts), I thought of Trefignath and that horrible aluminium works that engulfs it to the north. On the O.S. map it looked dreadful. It's not quite so bad as I thought, though. Unlike Greycroft^G in Cumbria, Trefignath does at least have the higher elevation so that its dignity is not dwarfed. The Mother mountain to my north lies in gentle mysterious mist as a bank of cloud the whole width of the north horizon slowly moves towards us, threatening to engulf us. I am so happy to discover Trefignath – it retains its mighty tomb status, even though those who knew it before the aluminium works must still be weeping.

Follow the map and orientate yourself via the huge aluminium plant(!)

Capel Garmon

The magical landscape of Capel Garmon stands high above the Conwy Falls, near the Fairy Glen, about ten miles west-north-west of Cerrig-y-Drudion. Capel Garmon is a flat patch of land surrounded by a natural amphitheatre which opens out to cosmic and breathtaking views of Snowdonia. A large chambered cairn stands at one end of the pasture, at the other end a natural green mound with a natural stone upon its summit. This is a gorsedd, or 'throne', and its top appears to have been weathered smooth as if from the eroding action of feet and squatting. The chambered cairn is a very northerly example of a Severn–Cotswold monument. The cairn is all gone, due to centuries of deterioration, but the excavators of 1925 shored up the passages and marked the cairn's former shape with small kerbs. The archaeologists also discovered pottery shards and bones from the side passage. The north–south passage once had many capstones, but now only one large fourteen feet long example at the south-west end remains. On the east side of the mound was a false entrance, similar to Belas Knap^G and Lugbury in Wiltshire. The entrance currently used is that caused by the 19th-century excavators. The other shorter passageway was most likely used into the second millennium before Christ. It is orientated directly at the gorsedd stone upon the natural mound. In the 19th century, Capel Garmon was used as a stable. Earlier in the 20th century, it was a sheepfold and even today the sheep naturally gravitate towards it. (See pp. 118–21 for further information on Capel Garmon.)

NOTES FROM THE SOUTH CHAMBER AT CAPEL GARMON: 31ST JULY 1996 CE

I'm overwhelmed here at the chamber, overwhelmed by the secondary nature of the monument to the landscape and by the importance of the huge gorsedd, or altar stone, centrally placed in this natural amphitheatre. The stone was the focal point for thousands of years before the Neolithic people began their huge building task here. The chambers are on a west–east axis, but there is another south–north chamber, the one in which I'm standing, which is clearly aligned on the altar or gorsedd… The aligning of chambers on a sacred hill reminds me of the alignment in the south of Arran, which is made on an island at SSE! There is a fabulous recumbent hill-figure to the north-west; the face and torso being formed by Craig Wen (at 2,224 feet, the face is a jagged number of peaks) and Carnedd Moel-Siahod (the torso at 2,860 feet maximum). The neck which joins the face and torso is created by a much closer mountain Mynydd Cribau (1,130 feet)…

I visited the gorsedd, which is huge and shot through with lots of white quartz. The top is well worn, as though used as a seat, or mounted platform, and there is a clear footway up to the platform through much use. On the ridge or throne of rock is a scattering of large placed stones, like the natural train of sarsens at the Polisher (on the Marlborough Downs). This has the signs of a gathering place stamped all over it – a sacred gathering place.

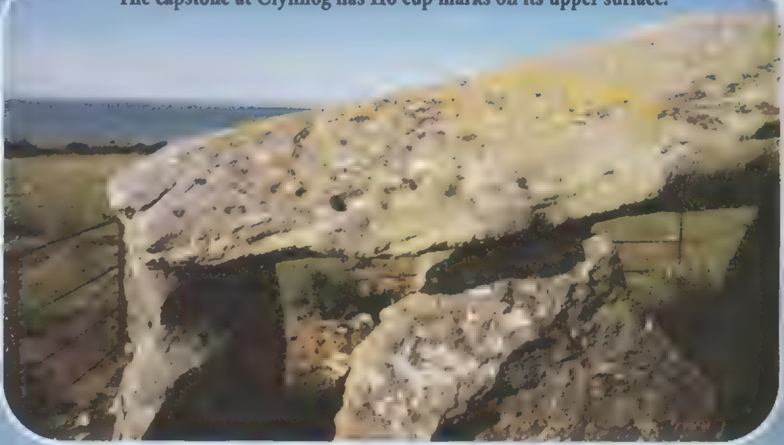
Capel Garmon is a Welsh Heritage site and is well signposted. From Betws-y-Coed, travel south down the A5 to Rhydlanfair. Take the left at the village and travel towards Capel Garmon village. The cairn is signposted from here.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
123.407495

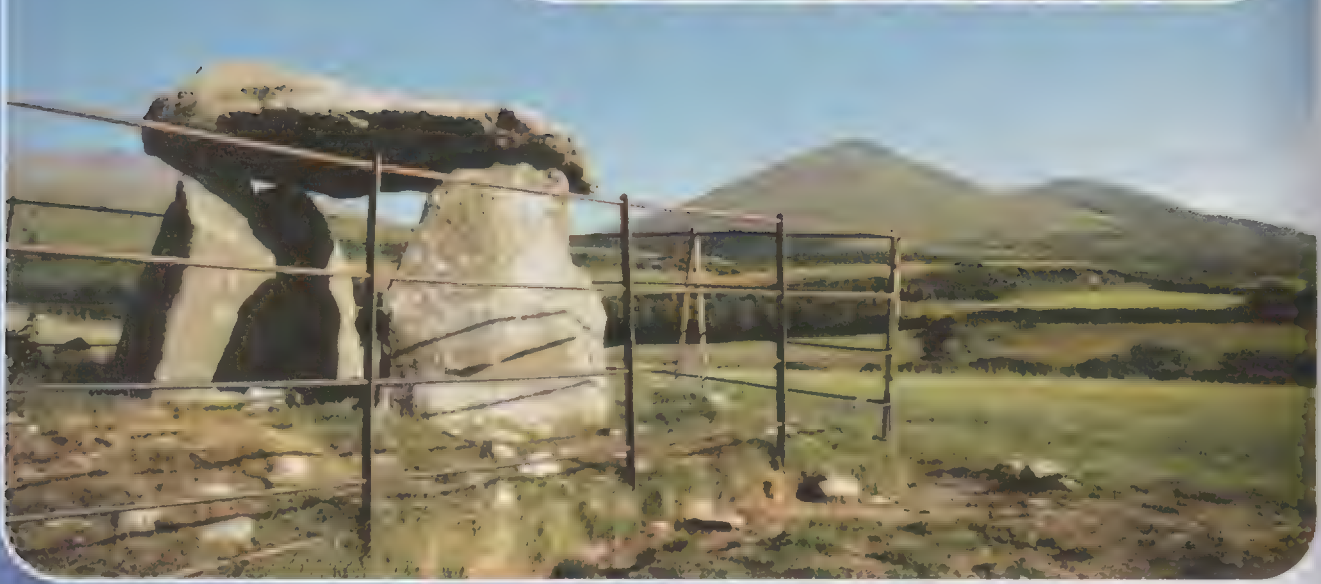
Clynnog Dolmen

On the north of the Lleyn peninsula, there is a flat area of sacred coastland between the seas of Caernarfon Bay and the huge sacred mountains of Gyrn Coch and Bwlch Mawr. Upon this wide flat ledge, evidence of continuing Pagan worship was found in the area of Clynnog Fawr until the end of the Dark Ages, and the perfect dolmen at Clynnog is in suitable company. Travelling towards the dolmen from the village, the visitor passes the church, which is said to have megaliths in its foundations. Clynnog was one of the early Keltic monasteries, like those at Bardsey, Bangor, Penmachno and Llangaffo. The only remaining free-standing 10th-century sundial in Britain stands in Clynnog churchyard – which almost undoubtedly has a Neolithic provenance. But then this can be seen merely by looking at the magical position of the settlement of Clynnog Fawr in the lea of Gyrn Goch, the Great Mother tit, which rises at the south. Passing south through the village, there is a holy well at 123.413493, but continuing past the churchyard, south-west along the high coast, the Clynnog Dolmen soon comes into view. This monument is small and perfect, with 110 cup-marks upon its nine foot long wedge-shaped capstone, but the excavations of 1876 discovered nothing of importance, except for eight other cup-marks which were situated on the east side of the capstone.

The capstone at Clynnog has 110 cup-marks on its upper surface.



BELOW: In the lea of Gyrn Goch.



WINDSWEPT NOTES AT CLYNNOG DOLMEN, LLEYN PENINSULA: 13TH JULY 1995 CE

Between the towering Mother tit called Gyrn Goch and the deep blue Irish Sea, Clynnog Dolmen is a tiny jewel held humorously captive by the rusty rails that protect it. Caernarfon Bay is an enormous spread of water, the ends barely visible on the horizon of this clear day, whilst to my south rear the jagged trio of Y Eifl, strung out black against the mythical horizon like the legendary Mither Tap in Aberdeenshire. As I sit in the rusty compound beneath the capstone with its 110 cup-marks, it is clear to see that this chamber presented Humankind to the Mother Earth as a diminutive follower, a harmoniser, a reconciler. Clynnog says I am nothing but a speck. But in being even a speck, I am alive. I am.

Clynnog Dolmen requires an O.S. map.

The Druids' Circle

On Cefn Coch, behind Penmaenmawr, overlooking the beautiful Conwy Bay, there is a disturbed complex of stone circles and ancient assorted megaliths. It is a steep climb up to the site, but mightily worthwhile, for the stones are not disappointing, and the traveller passes a small Irish five-stone circle at 115.725747. The oval Druids' Stones are about thirty in all and they are made of local granite. This is a finely positioned monument, being both at the neck of the prehistoric trackway and overlooking Tal-y-Fan, which rears up like a gigantic recumbent figure. The moon moves along the body of Tal-y-fan and Aubrey Burl has written that the position of the entrance stones of the Druids' Circle may announce some celestial event. Alexander Thom has suggested that this circle celebrated Beltane sunset. Two stones in the circle were once held in considerable awe. No-one ever cursed in front of the Deity stone, or it would 'bend its head and hit the offending person'. Legend has it that, one night, a disbeliever went to sneer at the stones, but he did not live until the next morning. Directly opposite the Deity stone was the Stone of Sacrifice, which had a cavity in its top large enough to hold a young child. Legend had it that any child placed in the cavity in the first month of its life would be a lucky adult. The circle was excavated in 1958, when the kist burial of a child was discovered. Above it was a Bronze Age food burial. Another child burial was discovered along with a bronze knife and three sandstone whetstones/sharpeners. The site is on the Neolithic trackway to the axe factory at Craig Lhwyd, suggesting a very early beginning for the Druids' Circle. The dreadful mess of a stone circle 100 yards west of the Druids' Circle is known as the Meini Hirion. It was excavated in 1959. But its low stony bank and battered circle stones give no indication as to the original nature of the monument. The stones at the edge of this monument once formed a contiguous kerb all around its edge.

NOTES AT THE DRUIDS' CIRCLE, ABOVE PENMAENMAWR: 29TH JULY 1996 CE

I've spent all day looking for circular churchyards. Ha, now I've walked uphill a couple of miles, I feel exhilarated and awed by these huge mountains. There are rough steps up to the Druids' Circle and the great altar is a sensation. But now, I must hurry back as a heavy sea mist is coming. Oo-er ... the full moon appeared centre stage in my photo out of nowhere while I lay head down writing notes. Yo, Der Lady, Der Lady, Who!

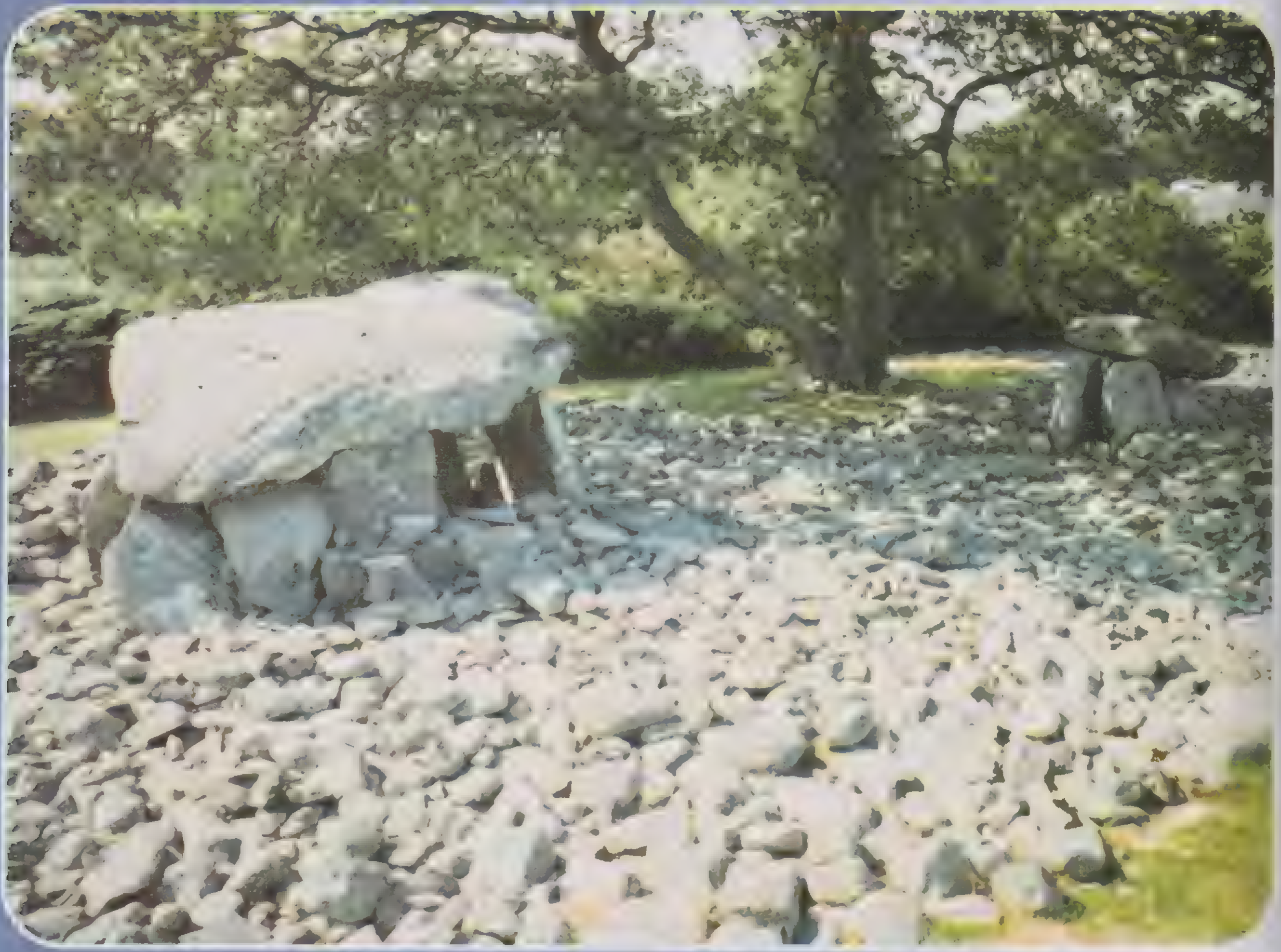
These sites stand high above the town of Penmaenmawr and require an O.S. map.

5 b) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
124.589228

Dyffryn Ardudwy

Pronounced 'Duffrin Ar-did-wee'. The double dolmens of Dyffryn Ardudwy are strangely situated behind a primary school in a busy coastal village between Tremagoc Bay and Barmouth. But what makes this site so exciting is the large cairn in which the two dolmens sit. This is evidence that as so often nowadays the stone has been entirely used for drystone walls and road material. The dolmens sit about ten paces apart in their sea of stones, but both have been horribly restored. There is a style of antiquarian restoration on many local monuments which is offensively Luddite, and Dyffryn Ardudwy is a sad example. In places where the stones are no longer strong enough to support the weight of the capstone, bricks and mortar have been substituted with no thought for the look of the monument. But the dolmens are still such classics that this disruption is, ultimately, neither here nor there. Frances Lynch notes that the larger of the dolmens is the inferior and later one, with smaller entrance stones. Excavators found two finely polished plaques in the eastern chamber – they were made of Mynydd Rhiw stone from the axe factory in the south of the Lleyn peninsula. Pottery was also discovered, along with a much later Bronze Age cremation which had been inserted into the chamber.



LATE AFTERNOON NOTES AT DYFFRYN ARDUDWY: 6 P.M., 11TH JULY 1995 CE

In [the] damp after the rain I sit in the chamber of the larger of these two … set in a perfunctory vestige of cairn behind a primary school. The atmosphere here is more redolent of my childhood holidays in the Rhondda Valley than any particular stones I know. Perhaps the clearest comparison is with the Ty Newydd^{G} cromlech on Anglesey, but that is more to do with the unsympathetic brickwork dished out to the main cromlech in some artless attempt to aid the capstone. But that is churlish – the two cromlechs are in such pleasant surroundings, though today hardly affords spectacular views, so I'm limited in my judgement. The smaller cromlech is truly exquisite and would be far more powerful without its elder sister and the token 'scree'.

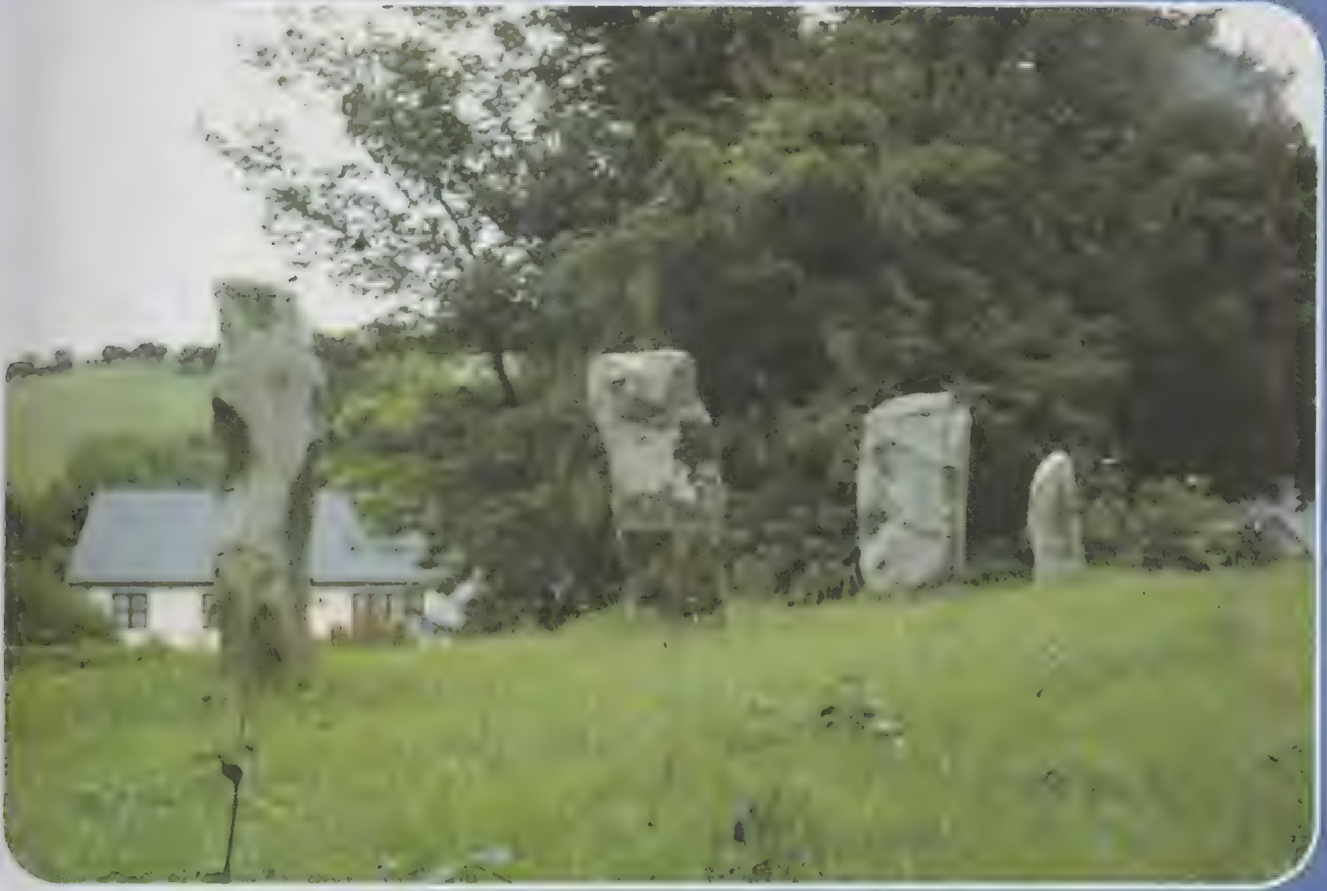
The village of Dyffryn Ardudwy is on the A496 coast road between Barmouth and Harlech. The dolmens are signposted near the school. In many road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
116.877615

5 b) 5

The Four Stones of Gwytherin

The church at Gwytherin stands on a natural mound artificially raised and shaped to give it greater prominence in the fastness of the beautiful and fertile Cledwen Valley. The four stones stand in a line on the north side of the church. Like most Welsh circle stones, they are not tall but have a robustness about them. On one of the stones is an inscription which appears to read 'Winne'. As the church is dedicated to St. Winnifred, it is worth speculating whether St. Winnifred was not given to the church by some scholar trying to back form a meaning in an effort to interpret the stone. Talking to a local man, I was told that a pilgrim path led from way up the valley at Taipellaf ('The Distant Houses') through Gwytherin all the way to St. Asaph. It is impossible to date this site, which is the purpose of its inclusion in this book. In the fastness of Wales, where the roads were slower than the rivers, mentalities changed so slowly that Gwytherin, like the Isle of Man,^{G} sends Christian linear time around in circles.



NOTES FROM THE FOUR STONES OF GWYNEDD: 31ST JULY 1996 CE

Here in a delightful and strange backwater, raised above the village yet still a part of it, I sit next to the Four Stones but with my back supported by the church wall. Unlike the 'Llans' which enclosed the majority of circles, Gwytherin church was built on a large raised earth mound overlooking the Afon Cledwen river and sitting centrally in a valley surrounded on all sides by beautiful hills. The peace here is extreme, though there are houses on all sides and very small children playing. There is a Dark Ages inscription on the most westerly stone which appears to read 'Winne' something or other, though Gwytherin is named after St. Winnifred, so I may just be being suggestible. But do visit this magical place if you can – it's a trippy revelation...

Travel to Gwytherin churchyard, north-east of Betws-y-Coed.

5 b) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
116.087801

The Gop

High on Gop Hill stands the huge Neolithic cairn known as the Gop, the second largest artificial mound in Britain after Silbury.[G] The Gop inherited its name from the breathtaking views which are to be seen from all sides of this summit – people literally came to 'gawp'. The view to the Valley of Clwyd is a spectacle of genius, the sea giving way to a wide floodplain with a majesty of distant horizons, encased in solid cloud, an uncanny recumbent figure on the far distant line. Then, at the south-west, the view into the valley is shattered by the line of wonderful hills moving southwards: 1) Moel Hiraddug – Closest to the road, this gigantic Mother has a long and oval Iron Age hillfort ringing its passable sides, whilst the north is sheer dangerous cliff. 2) Marian Ffrith – A strangely apt name for this lovely slight Maiden Hill, in light contrast to her neighbours. 3) Coed Gwnny – A lesser tree-covered smooth with unseen tumuli. 4) Moel Maenefa – Hardly noticeable but a large hill bald and crooked backed. The Valley of the Afon Chwiler then breaks up the line, until 5) Moel-y-parc and Moel Plas-yw, the two huge mountains to the south which are divided by a tall antenna, with the legendary Moel Arthur standing just out of view. The Gop was excavated in 1886–7 and again by Boyd Dawkins in 1901. The mound was made from huge piles of limestone blocks, with a large kerb around the base. Because this site stands on the summit of a steep hill, the logistics of such a building operation are quite unfathomable. Traces of Neolithic settlement litter the hillside and prehistoric burials have been discovered in the caves below. A proliferation of Bronze Age round barrows also surround the Gop. The excavations dug thirty feet into this incredible structure and the depredations are all still very visible from the summit. But the Gop remains around forty-five feet tall – a breathtaking and puzzling achievement.

NOTES ON THE GOP: 28TH JULY 1996 CE

What a discovery! The Gop was known for thousands of years before me, but now she stands breasts to the sky as I witness this forever achievement. A huge Neolithic hill atop a natural hill, built by men who first climbed a hill to build a hill, whose feet pound below me, with the resonance of one who feels the Truth of their creation. Their countless hours of to so that I could sit and regard any part of the horizon – in former days, all roads did converge at the Gop, the hill altar that the Bible had described, along with Silbury, Pitnacree[G] and the other major Mothers…

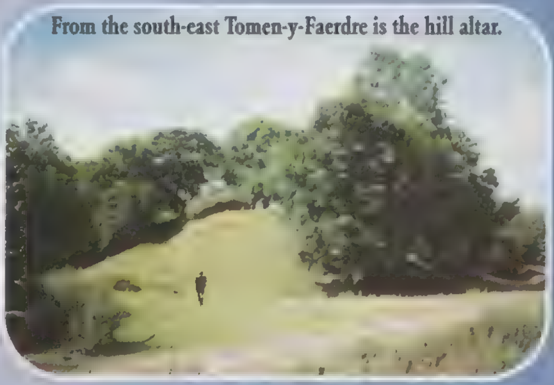
The Gop is below the village of Trelawnyd on the A5151 between Dyserth and Gorsedd. Take the minor road north towards Llanasa a very short distance – an obscure signpost on the left directs you to the hill.

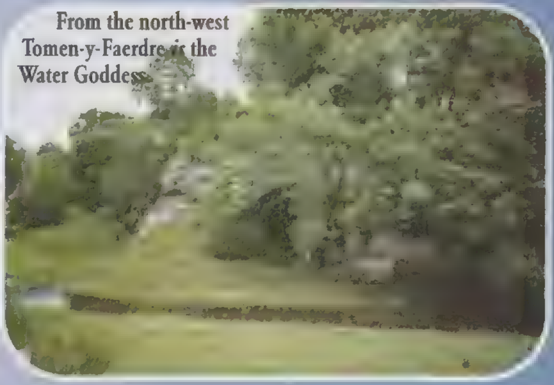
ORDNANCE SURVEY
116.19.56

5 b) 7

Llanarmon-yn-Ial

About twelve miles north of Llangollen is the beautiful Alyn Valley, where the north-flowing river Alyn moves through a tight fertile landscape on the way to its confluence with the river Dee. Approaching the village of Llanarmon-yn-Ial, built high on the western valley shelf, the Ancients would have passed the Neolithic caves of Rhos Isaf. From here, they would have continued north almost two miles along the valley ridge which, today, is tarred as the modern B5431. Otherwise they would have arrived by boat travelling parallel with the pathway up this narrow river valley. At Llanarmon, the trackway rises gently into the village and ends at the circular churchyard, which was formerly a stone circle. Llanarmon is a pentacle junction of five roads and was once a great Pagan centre – it has always been known as Bwlch Crug-Glas, or 'Pass of the Green Mounds'.


From the south-east Tomen-y-Faerdre is the hill altar.


From the north-west Tomen-y-Faerdre is the Water Goddess.

In the Stone Age, this village square would have been a verdant and divine clearing, though the churchyard gives no indication as to how big the circle would have been. There is a possible circle stone being used as a gatepost at the farm across the road to the north of the church. (When looking at the stone, also ask the farmer's permission to look at Tomen-y-Faerdre, which is also on his land. He is very friendly.) The circular churchyard has been extended and meddled with so many times, but its obvious position and circumstances make it hard to ignore as a prehistoric Pagan centre. It was for this reason that St. Garmon and his fellow missionary Lupus came to preach here on Easter morning 430 CE. It is unlikely that the stone circle would have been uprooted immediately, but the churchyard appears to be much bigger nowadays than even its original 'Llan' dimensions, so here judgement is tricky.

Passing down into the river valley, visitors crossing the bridge over the Alyn can have no idea what the Tomen-y-Faerdre might be. It is only when they turn to walk behind the great stone water altar that it is revealed as a changeling Mother hill altar. The shape of Tomen-y-Faerdre has been altered over the most recent thousand years, for use as a motte and bailey – the ditch was dug during the 12th century by the English forces of the campaign of King John. But the general Silbury[G] shape echoes the sacred hill of Plas, the original Tomen-y-Faerdre blueprint, which rears up breathtaking and magnificent at the west.

Between 1869 and 1873, Boyd Dawkins excavated a number of limestone caves beside the Alyn at Rhos Isaf, south of Llanarmon-yn-Ial, at 116.18.53. Burials were discovered in the caves, along with objects of settlement such as pottery vessels and flint implements. The bones of bear, dog, fox, badger, pig, deer and large birds were also found. A polished green stone axe was discovered in the caves; a circular stone hammer was also discovered at the farm of Rhiw Ial 800 yards to the north-west of the village. These are now in the National Museum of Cardiff. On the eminence in the field south of Tomen-y-Faerdre stands the Tomen Kefrydd at 116.193558, a Bronze Age barrow which was opened in the presence ot the antiquary Thomas Pennant.

(See Chapter 7 for more information.)

DISCOVERY OF A SACRED LANDSCAPE AT LLANARMON-YN-IAL, CLWYDIAN MOUNTAINS: 4 P.M., 29TH JULY 1996 CE

What started as a study of a circular churchyard has unfolded into a truly stupendous sacred centre. For three years, I've had the words 'Tomen-y-Faerdre' written in impending visit black ink, thinking that it would be some minor sepulchre or so forth. No! It's a Neolithic mount, a sacred heap piled on top of a natural rocky outcrop and created in a river valley floor, mirroring the conical massif called Plas by the locals, and Moel-y-Plas by the Ordnance Survey. Claims that it was a motte and bailey are confounded by the simple acknowledgement that children of five armed with slingshots could have besieged it, so impossible would Tomen-y-Faerdre be to defend. I bought *Just One Parish*, a small history of the village, and have discovered mounds and gatepost/standing stones by the church, caves and a trackway which passes the Tomen-y-Faerdre *and* the large cave opposite. The Tomen-y-Faerdre has a deepish ditch around it, Maeshowe-like,[G] reinforcing its ancient origins.

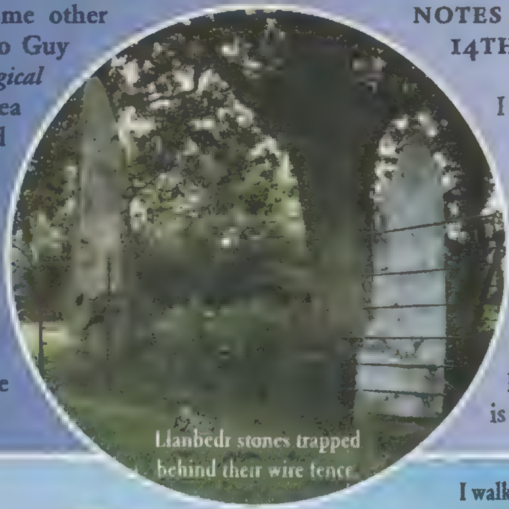
Travel to Llanarmon-yn-Ial, south-east of Ruthin, on the B5431. Tomen-y-Faerdre is beside the river Alyn or Alun, in the valley to the near east.

5 b) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
124.VARIOUS. SEE BELOW

The Stones of Llanbedr

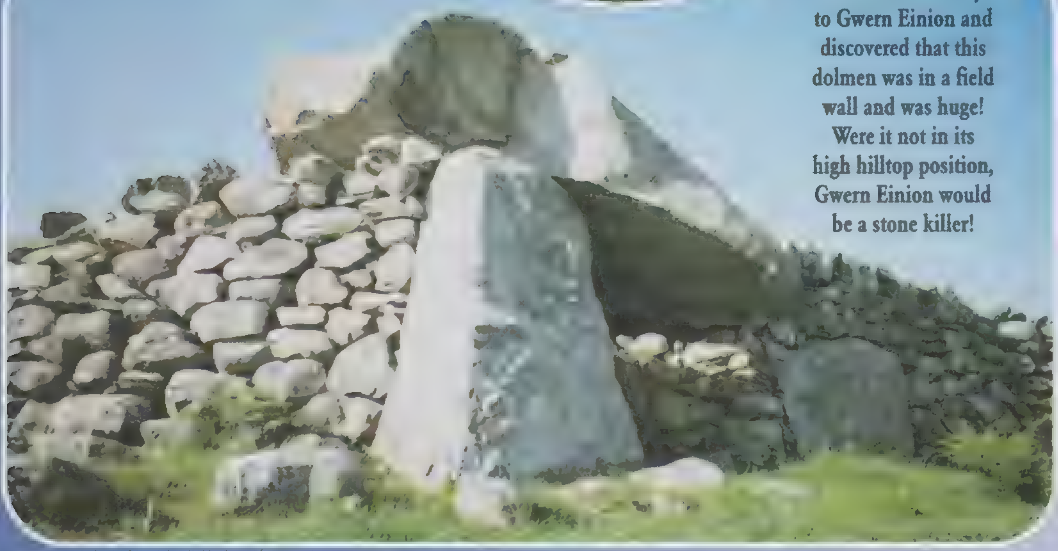
At the mouth of the river Artro, the two Llanbedr stones stand next to a large young oak tree hemmed in by an iron fence. The tallest stone is a fine tall column over ten feet tall with a Druid-like shape. The other seven foot slab is slight, its diminutive top evoking comparisons with the Goddess stones at Lundin Links[G] and Callanish.[G] Unfortunately, the stones have been mistreated these past centuries and the two were once four or five broad stones, eight foot high, standing upright. The road through Llanbedr was a famous Bronze Age trackway to the settlement and circles on Moel Goedog, over five miles to the north-east. It is likely that the track started at the mooring-point between the Llanbedr church and the standing stones. Llanbedr church has obvious prehistoric provenance in the form of its great spiral-grooved stone, a Neolithic carved stone which today sits in the church, vertically opposite the front door. Its Neolithic roots are shown in a legend which claims that the site of the church was changed at the behest of the Devil 'or some other supernatural being', according to Guy Williams' *A Guide to the Magical Places of England and Scotland.* Sea travellers would have passed Shell Island and into the river estuary, where they would have been received at the church site. They would then have passed northwards down the track to Loel Goedog, via Llanfair, past the endless prehistoric homesteads of Groes-las above Harlech castle.



Llanbedr stones trapped behind their wire fence.

NOTES AT LLANBEDR, GWYNEDD: 14TH JULY 1995 CE

I sit with my back to the smaller of these two menhirs, a brittle-looking six footer about as tough as a box of caramel crunch. How it has remained for so long I cannot imagine. Its elder brother is a stout ten foot plus, shot through with white quartz. Again [they are] enclosed in the typical North Walean rusty fence… Once, there was another standing stone in the southerly field behind the petrol station, but now it is gone, so who knows? This site suggests a very important position, as the stones stand on a flat plain 200 yards from the Afon Artro and may have been the first of a series of ritual sites now represented by three churches all in the centre of Lanbedr where the Afon Artro next flows…



I walked nervously to Gwern Einion and discovered that this dolmen was in a field wall and was huge! Were it not in its high hilltop position, Gwern Einion would be a stone killer!

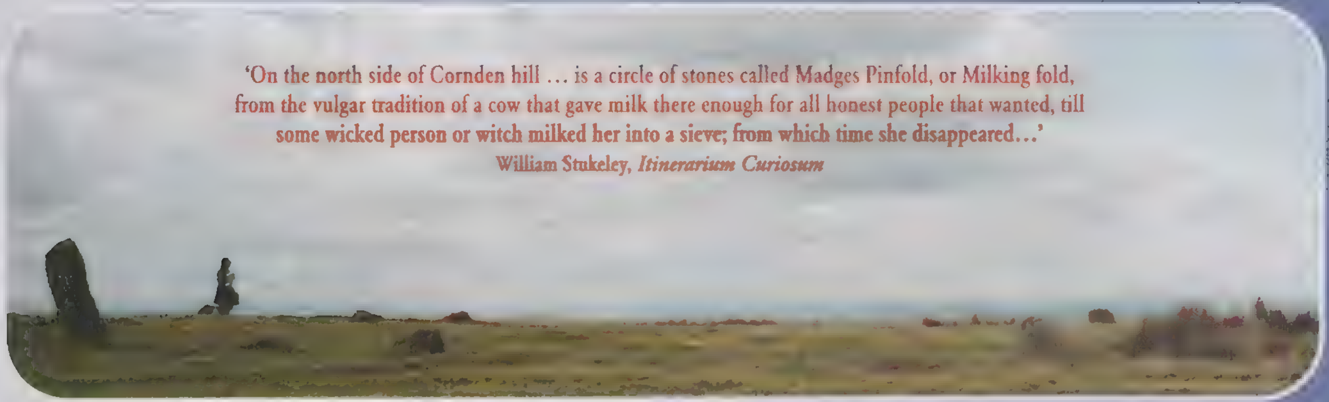
**LLANBEDR CHURCH
124.585269
LLANBEDR STONES:
124.584271
GWERN EINION:
124.587286**

Llanbedr is on the A496 between Harlech and Barmouth. The Spiral Stone is in St. Peter's church. The standing stones are on the opposite side of the road, visible amongst trees in a field next to the petrol station. Gwern Einion requires an O.S. map and an attitude.

Mitchell's Fold

The stone circle of Mitchell's Fold stands on wonderfully high flat ground at a height of 1,083 feet, with north-westerly views right across the Camlad Valley towards its distant confluence with the river Severn. To the south is the magnificent Koeur hill known as Corndon, ringed with cairns galore. The circle stones stand in an ellipse around thirty yards across. They are all made of the local dolerite from Stapeley Hill, a mile to the north-east. None of the stones are huge, and Aubrey Burl suggests that there were once up to thirty of them. These stones were the subject of much work by the Dragon Project, an Earth Mysteries team led by the visionary Paul Devereux. His book *Places of Power* describes clear anomalies at many megalithic sites, but the work seems to have been left behind throughout the '90s, as Devereux watched his degree of success increase with his belief in his own mysticism.

Mitchell's Fold suffered from a horrific attack of vandalism in the summer of 1994 CE, but its out-of-the-way position is such that it is not so much the stones as the site which give the circle its sense of cosmic drama. In any case, at Mitchell's Fold, 'twas ever thus –a local farmer once dug up a few of the stones for his horsepond(!) and, as locals say, 'he never did no good after'. The stone circle has also been known as Medgel's Fold or even Medgley's Fold, after a giantess who used to milk her cows in amongst the stones. Several books tell the legend of the Blameless White Cow of Mitchell's Fold. Both Jennifer Westwood's epic *Albion* (1985) and Charlotte Burn's Victorian study *Shropshire Folk-Lore* (1883) explain how a magical cow arrived during a period of drought and famine. She allowed herself to be milked by the local people, who never took advantage of her kindness and were amazed to see that she always had enough milk for them. Medgel the witch heard about the cow and appeared before her as a pauper desperate for milk. The cow duly obliged, but the mean witch milked her into a sieve until she was entirely dry and the Blameless White Cow of Mitchell's Fold was never seen again. The witch was subsequently turned into the tallest stone as a punishment. In his 1841 *Salopia Antiqua*, or 'Ancient Shropshire', Charles Harteshorne says that the disappearing White Cow had gone to Dunsmore Heath in Warwickshire, where she was killed by Guy of Warwick. There is an illustration of Medgel the witch milking the magical cow carved on a capital in the Holy Trinity church at Middleton-in-Chirbury in Shropshire. A similar story of a magical white cow was also told at Callanish,ᴳ in the Outer Hebrides, but it may have been brought there with later antiquaries, as is so often the case with many of the obscurer parts of Britain. It has been argued that locals of the 17th and 18th centuries were so afraid of upsetting visiting antiquarian writers that they were known to agree to any scrap of folklore foisted upon them, so long as it did not affect the Master. Of course, this has provided us with an even more colourful folklore, but has sacrificed a tremendous amount of future discoveries by mystics and seers, since substitutions brought on by Keltic revivals and so forth often remain forever. Think of how the Iron Age village of Jarlshof, on Shetland Mainland, began its life as a Sir Walter Scott creation. Indeed, wherever there has been a choice, I have offered the most likely original name ahead of the antiquarian substitution every time.



'On the north side of Cornden hill … is a circle of stones called Madges Pinfold, or Milking fold, from the vulgar tradition of a cow that gave milk there enough for all honest people that wanted, till some wicked person or witch milked her into a sieve; from which time she disappeared…'
William Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum*

NOTES AT NOON FROM MITCHELL'S FOLD STONE CIRCLE, SALOP, WALES/ENGLAND BORDER: 30TH SEPTEMBER 1991 CE

Mitchell's Fold is a full 360-degree treat, each new view is mind-boggling. Many of the stones are tiny, some almost chipped away, and one or two probably placed in recent years to mark fallen or removed stones. It is warm and sunny, the sun drenching this plateau, the stones guarded by heather and most of the rain from the past few days still collected in shallow gullies… The only large stone is the Witch stone, after which the circle is named, Mitchell (or Medgel) the witch having milked the white cow of legend dry when she arrived to bring food to the local folk. The magic of this circle is very powerful; like the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor,ᴳ the size of the stones is unimportant…

Mitchell's Fold requires an O.S. map.

5 b) 10

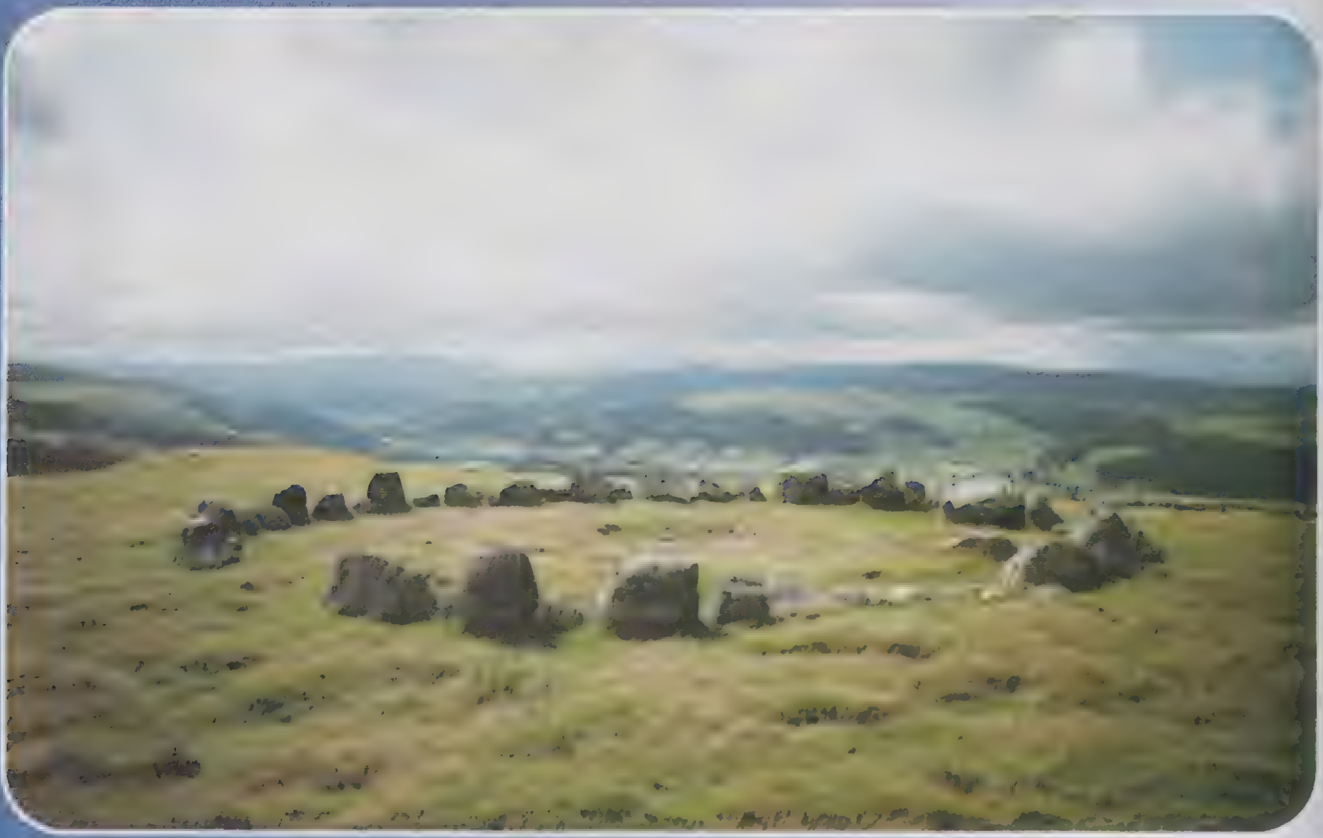
ORDNANCE SURVEY
125.056372

Moel ty Uchaf

Pronounced 'Moil tee Ichaff' ('ch' as in 'loch'). The exquisite stone circle of Moel ty Uchaf, or 'Hill of the Highest House', stands almost on a summit at an altitude of 1,375 feet, looking north-west into the beautiful infinity of Clwyd. Below is the confluence of the sacred rivers Dee and Ceidiog. And it is just beyond the first bend that the trackway from Moel ty Uchaf crosses the river on its way to Tyfos stone circle before continuing up the pass of Nant Llyn Mynyllo. Moel ty Uchaf was a megalithic test case for Alexander Thom's theories – in the book *Time Stands Still*, the architect and Thom advocate Keith Critchlow superimposed a seven-pointed star, along with other five and seven-fold geometrical shapes, onto the ground plan of Moel ty Uchaf. Critchlow calls the circle 'perhaps the most geometrically sophisticated of all the Neolithic structures. The overall setting of stones would fit within the great maze on the floor of Chartres cathedral, but the resonances from the cathedral-sized plateau on which this small circle sits echo all around the huge encompassing bowl of hills.' The forty-one stones of the circle are only around thirteen paces across and despite their bulk, each is no more than two feet tall. The entrance is at the south-south-west and there is a small kist in the circle's centre.

Tyfos Stone Circle (O.S. 125.028388)

This low-slung circle stands beside a prehistoric track in a field in front of a farmhouse, overlooking the river Dee. Tyfos is difficult to interpret because of so many ancient vandalisms here. It may have once had a large covering mound or it may have been 'a free-standing stone circle ... with over twenty stones enclosing an area about fifty-five feet across', as Aubrey Burl writes in his *Guide to the Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany*.



MOEL TY UCHAF, BREATHLESS AND HUSHING NOTES, IN NORTH WALES BEYOND ROME: 31ST JULY 1996 CE

I'm shaken up and that's a fact. The view here is the same as it was 5,000 years, nay, 10,000 years ago. And whoa, does it resound in me. This circle with its contiguous stones is just a perfect crowning glory to the hill and to the west is a dark massif of mountain blackness threatening to remind me of just how brief I am at any moment. There is no point in explaining the view up here – it is beyond. Any less than this could be life, but this is truly beyond. Poetically blathering, a gathering of one, lone, true and stuck like glue.

These sites both require the same O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
123.229346

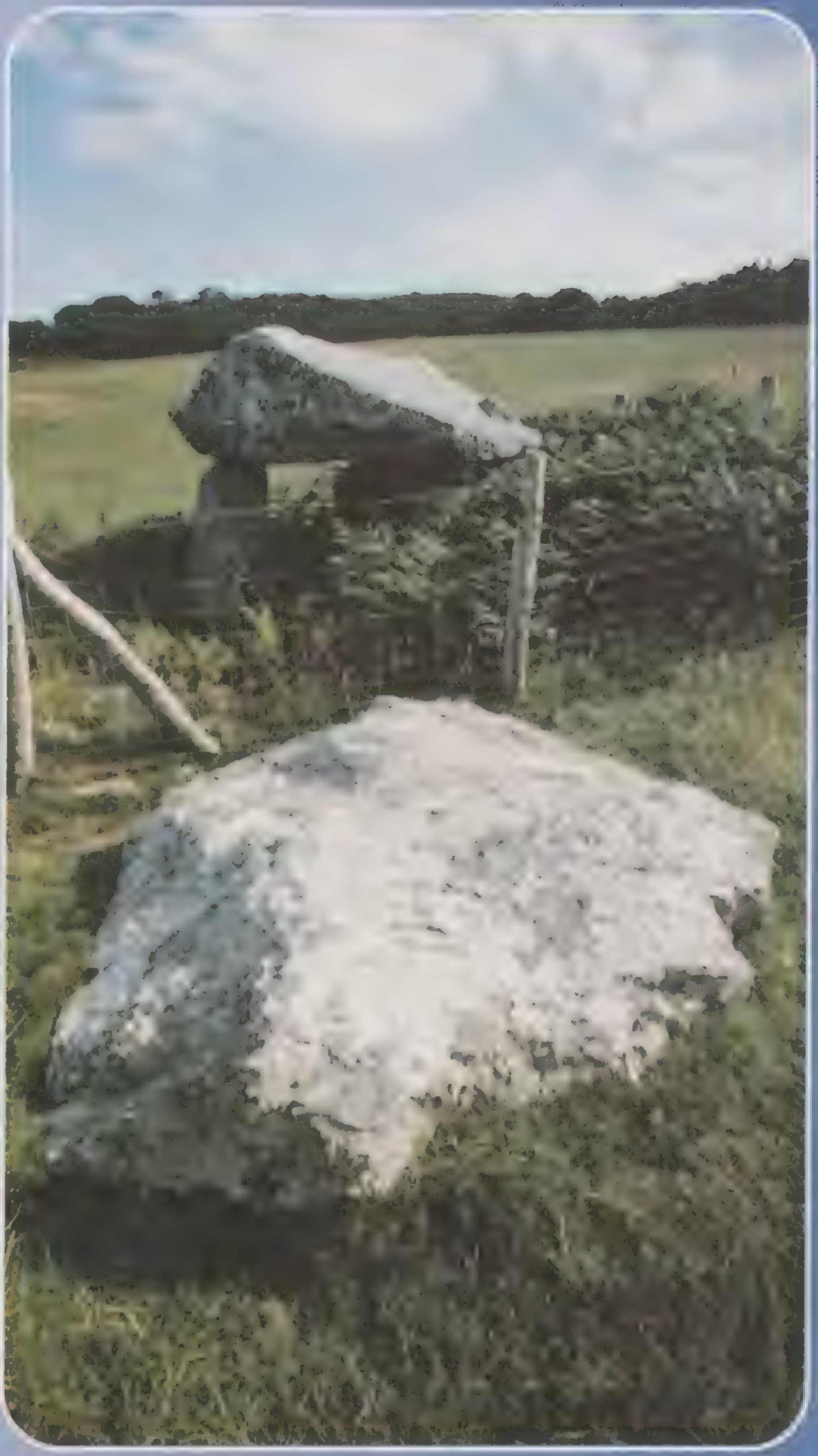
5 b) 11

Penllech Coetan Arthur

Pronounced "Pen-lech (as in "loch") Coy-ton'. Penllech Coeten Arthur is a superb dolmen with slabs of white quartz amongst its grey stone chamber. The dolmen is so removed from its original construction that it is impossible to classify it as a particular type – just three four-and-a-half feet uprights supporting a ridged capstone. It stands on the north-eastern slopes of Mynydd Cefnamwlch, facing inland in an area of the Lleyn peninsula where it is impossible not to see the sea. Instead, Penllech Coetan Arthur is orientated towards the enormous sacred hill called Carn Fadron, which looms up to the north-west and has spectacular views up to the sacred hills along the coast. Legend has it that the dolmen was dismantled and the stones carted away, but the cows were 'so distressed by this ,vandalism that they bellowed incessantly until the tomb was rebuilt', according to Frances Lynch's mighty *Gwynedd.* There is a cup-marked stone at O.S. 123.224345 on the north-eastern slope of the hill which is about fifteen inches by three feet across and has around twenty shallow cup-marks upon its flat face. It used to be a gatepost in a local farm until recently.

PENLLECH COETAN ARTHUR – NOTES BENEATH THE CAPSTONE, LLEYN PENINSULA: 13TH JULY 1995 CE

Beneath this tiny dolmen, I shelter from the deeply penetrating rays of this July sun. Directly east is the huge magic mountain called Carn Fadron, rising grey and Mother-like as Moelfre on the end of the peninsula. To the north, I can see way up the coast to the towering heights of Bwlch Mawr, Gyrn Goch, Gyrn Ddu and the Town of Giants, that strange massif with its hillfort, in Welsh known as Tre'r Ceiri. Coetan Arthur is an outrageous place, a classic dolmen on a northern slope looking out to the Mother, to the future and to hope. Two large quartz slabs lie prostrate, one within the dolmen precinct, the larger open to the sun, its brilliance making it impossible to photograph today. The sheep are gradually returning to their place around this dolmen and I shall leave them to their peace on this Lleyn peninsula.



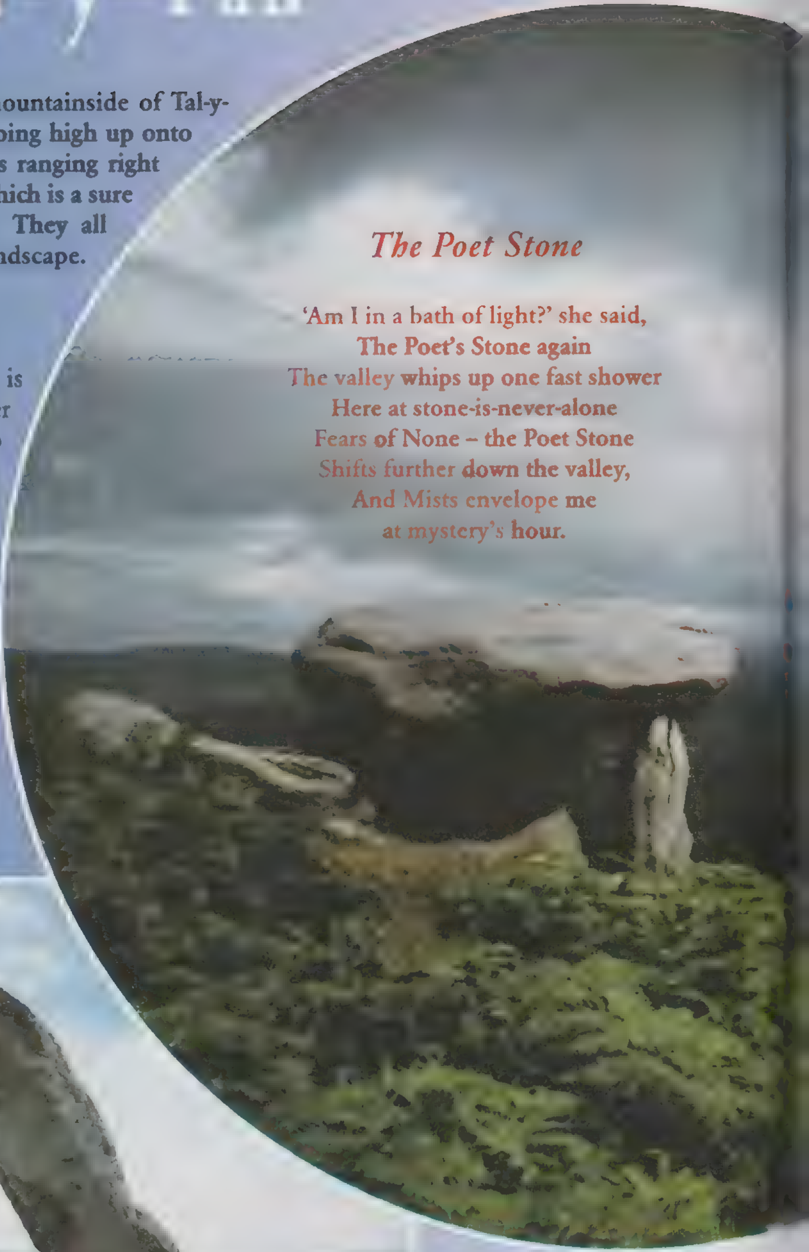
Penllech Coetan Arthur requires an O.S. map.

Tal-y-Fan

Pronounced 'Talla-Van'. From Cefn Goch, the long mountainside of Tal-y-Fan looks like a gigantic recumbent figure. On climbing high up onto that figure, a whole line of prehistoric sites emerges ranging right across Tal-y-Fan, a Roman road bisecting each one, which is a sure indicator of the former importance of these sites. They all stand at over 1,000 feet, in an idyllic and removed landscape.

Maen-y-Bardd aka The Poet Stone

The translated name of this prettiest of all dolmens is 'The Poet's Stone', and it is said that whosoever spends the night beneath its capstone will either go mad or become a poet. The dolmen has a large twelve foot by eight foot capstone, but it is tiny, though what it lacks in size is made up for in views south-east down the Conwy Valley. This cairn was robbed many times for local field walls and the original shape is almost impossible to define – a field wall now cuts through the site, along with a stream. There is another battered kist upon the hill-side to the north-west only 100 yards' climb. In the past, antiquaries have also referred to this dolmen as the Llech yr Ast, Cwrt-yr-Bugail or Cwrt-yr-Filiast, 'The Greyhound Kennel'.



The Poet Stone

'Am I in a bath of light?' she said,
The Poet's Stone again
The valley whips up one fast shower
Here at stone-is-never-alone
Fears of None – the Poet Stone
Shifts further down the valley,
And Mists envelope me
at mystery's hour.

Self-portrait with tripod from Ffon-y-Cawr.

BWLCH-Y-DDEUFAN: 115.715718
CERRIG PRYFFAID: 115.724713
FFON-Y-CAWR: 115.737717
THE GIANTESS' APRONFUL: 115.717716
MAEN-Y-BARDD: 115.740717

Travel to Tal-y-Bont between Dolgarrog and Conwy. At Y Bedol pub, see sign for 'Llanbedr-y-Cennin ¾ mile'. Drive on this road until you are way out onto the hills, always taking what appears to be the main road! After 15–20 minutes, the road comes to an end at a car park. Some of the monuments are now directly ahead of you. Others are behind you, down the green trackway.

Ffon-y-Cawr

Just a quarter of a mile to the west along the hollow green Roman road, the fine seven-foot standing stone known as Ffon-y-Cawr, or 'The Giant's Staff', stands rooted in the ground. Legend has it that a giant standing at the distant southern hill of Pen-y-Gaer hurled his stick which flew north and stuck here in the mud. Ffon-y-Cawr is sometimes known as Arthur's Spear. Passing west a further 100 yards sees the broad-sided Cae Coch standing stone before the green track develops into a tarred road.

Cerrig Pryffaid

To the south is a lost burnt mound and the tiny stone circle of Cerrig Pryffaid, or 'The Perfect Stones' – fourteen tiny stones in a seventy-five foot diameter. The name of this stone circle has had some hilarious translations, the best being 'the stone of the flies', whilst the real root word is from the Goddess Bree.

Bwlch-y-Ddeufan & the Giantess' Apronful

The Roman road continues into the dark cleft between Drosgl and Foel Lwyd, and here where the National Grid sends its devastating overhead power cables stand the Bwlch-y-Ddeufan standing stones, two large six foot and eight foot sentinels guarding the pass. Looking back down the valley, there is a huge cairn now reduced to a low scatter known as the Barclodiad-y-Gawres, another 'Giantess' Apronful'. The large stone central grave is over to one side, suggesting that these cairn stones have been considerably shifted over time. Up at 1,350 feet, it is a bizarre end to a walk which had started as though in faerie land.

Looking down the Conwy Valley from the Tal-y-Fan Menhir.

Self-portrait with tripod at Bwlch-y-Ddeufan, with impending storm.

BLOWN NOTES AT THE MAEN-Y-BARDD CROMLECH, TAL-Y-FAN: 30TH JULY 1996 CE

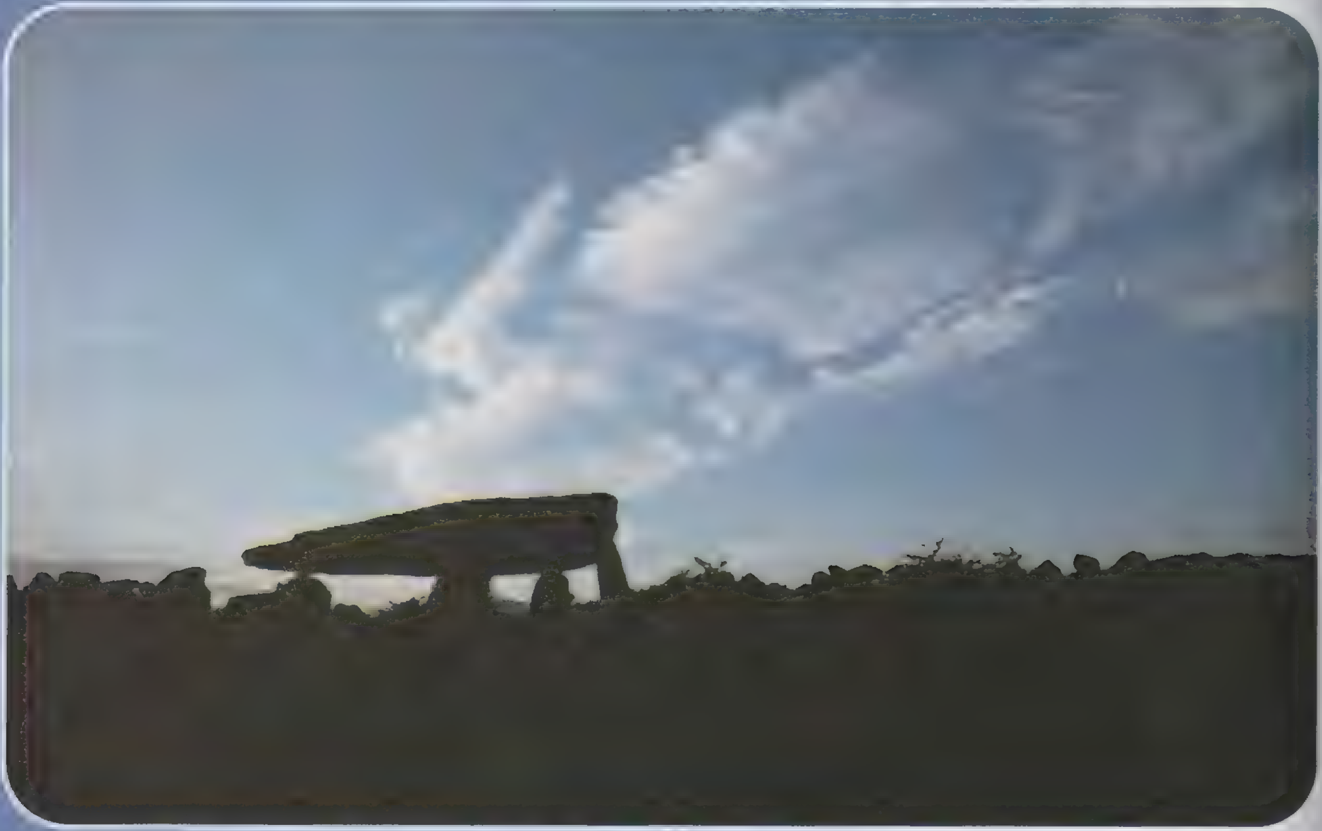
[illegible]

5 b) 13

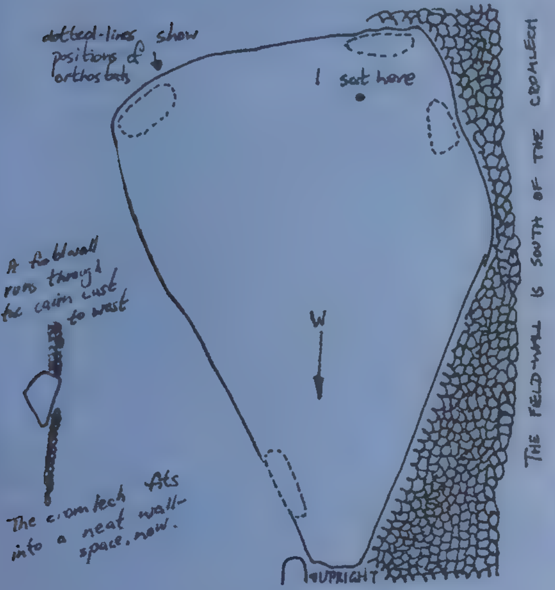
ORDNANCE SURVEY
123.498414

Ystumcegid

Pronounced 'Us-tum Keggid'. Two miles north of Criccieth overlooking the river valley of the beautiful Afon Dwyfor stands the streamlined dolmen at Ystumcegid. This dolmen has a capstone like a megalithic piano lid – dramatically pointed like the prow of a ship. The monument is bisected by a field wall and the drystones were all once a part of this magnificent structure. In her wonderful book *Gwynedd,* Frances Lynch has suggested that Ystumcegid is a rare northern example of a Severn-Cotswold cairn. Though too much of the cairn material has gone to define its original shape, the flat capstone has a sense of Tinkinswood^G about it.



NOTES IN PENCIL FROM THE PIANO LID CAPSTONE AT YSTUMCEGID FARM, NEAR PORTHMADOG: SUNDOWN, 13TH JULY 1995 CE


dotted-lines show positions of orthostats
I sat here
W
A fieldwall runs through the cairn east to west
The cromlech fits into a neat wall-space, now.
UPRIGHT
THE FIELD-WALL IS SOUTH OF THE CROMLECH

This is a dream come true. I have dreamed of visiting Ystumcegid for years now. A hike from the farm, through a wood off the track past two deserted houses, over a marshy bog and … I am in wonderland. Sitting on the huge piano lid about twelve feet by ten feet across and at a jaunty slope, I am stoned on the good life. The cromlech's cairn was used as field material – walls to run east-west, but this low Tinkinswood-like slab of a capstone is left as an epic monument sitting on a slight knoll in a 360 [degree] wonderland. The eastern horizon is close and as inviting as home, whilst the west from south to north-west is an epic of mythical proportions as the mountains of the peninsula encircle from a far distance, the sea flat to the south at the far horizon. As poetic a place as I could find anywhere – the wait has been entirely worth it. But I do not wish to leave, as the dying rays of the sun cease to warm my fluorescent torso any longer.

Ystumcegid requires an O.S. map and an attitude.

Isle of Man

'The Isle of Man is indeed the nearest community to the mean centre of the British Isles.'
H. S. CORRAN, *THE ISLE OF MAN*

'The Isle of Man is the omphalos of the British Isles.'
JOHN MICHELL, *AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD*

At the hub of Bridgit's Wheel

The Isle of Man is a mystery island, a self-governing anomaly not part of Britain, the United Kingdom, or even a member of the European Community. It nods allegiance to Queen Elizabeth, but is ruled by a bizarre and archaic outdoor government which centres around an artificial earth-mound called the Tynwald. This word evolved from the 'ting' or 'thing', a Scandinavian form of outdoor lawcourt, and, though the main aspects of government are nowadays formed indoors at the Douglas council buildings, no new law is ratified until it has been proclaimed in both Manx and English from upon the Tynwald Mound at St. John's. Were we to visit the Isle of Man just for its Neolithic remains, then the trip would be briefly exhilarating and thought-provoking. But in the right frame of mind, the Isle of Man is a magical tween times place, full of Manx little people such as the Glashans and Phynnoderee, terrifying spirit monsters such as the dreaded buggane and the Moddey Dhoo, cruel medieval punishments, harsh Norse morals and historical happenings where the very ancient and the merely old frequently converge in bizarre ways. For example, the physical position of Man, Mona or Ellan Vannin, as the island has variously been known, is surely more than just a curiosity. Standing in the middle of the Irish Sea, the Isle of Man is twenty miles from Burrow Head, in Scottish Wigtownshire, thirty-two miles from St. Bees Head in Cumbria, forty-five miles from the coast of Anglesey in North Wales, and thirty-two miles from the Irish coast at County Down. In his book *The Isle of Man*, the historian H. S. Corran has called the island 'a British Mediterranean – a land girt quadrilateral whose four sides are England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales'. It is this universal relationship with the rest of the British which makes Man so remarkable. Draw a line from the Land's End to John O'Groats and Man will appear at the centre, ready to provide the axis of a circle that spins right around Britain and Ireland. Drawing a line longways through the length of Man itself, from the lighthouse at Point of Aire in the north to the lighthouse at Dreswick Point in the south, causes the island to be halved in a way which goes right though St. Luke's, the old Tynwald Hill where the Manxmen had their outdoor government for many hundreds of years. The dividing line also happens to pass for a few miles along the Millennium Way. This track was redeveloped for the 1979 CE Millennium festival from a series of prehistoric trackways which naturally bisect the island. The Romans never found Man, leaving intact a Goddess culture, vestiges of which still resounded as late as the 10th century after Christ, when the northern Manx tribes successfully employed female warriors to defeat their opponents in the south. Man stands at the geographical centre of the British Isles, and its position between the coasts of Northern Ireland and Cumbria placed it as a perfect staging-post for Neolithic travellers distributing ceremonial stone axes. The Isle of Man as the central physical omphalos of the British Isles is a powerful poetic truth.

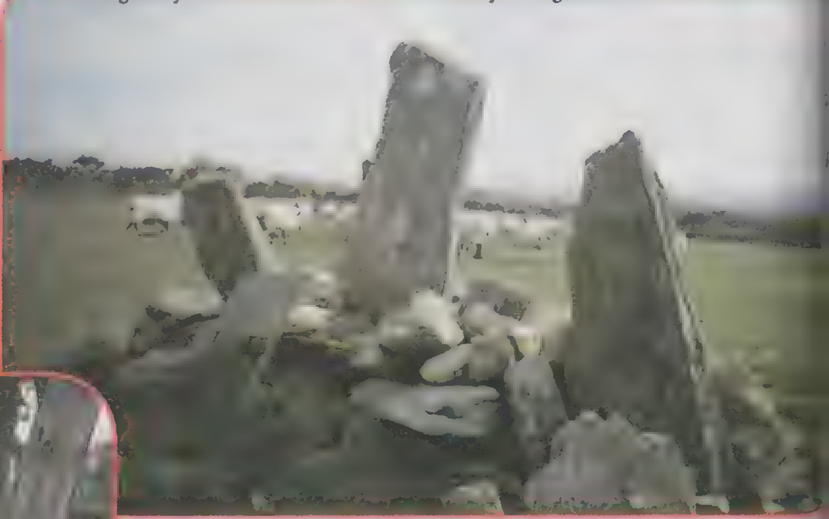
King Ory's grave has an annexe hidden in the garden of a nearby cottage.

Whether or not the image of Man as omphalos exerts any true meaning beyond this must be further questioned when regarding the Legs of Man. Some historians argue that this image dates only from the time of Edmund of Sicily, who inherited the rule of the Isle of Man at the end of the Norse dynasty. Others say that the symbol was already in use by then, brought over by the Vikings. Gordon Kniveton has pointed out the similarity to the swastika in his book *The Manx Experience*, whilst the Irish Bridgit Cross, especially in its three-legged form, does much to suggest the image of an omphalos, a navel, the hub or axis of the world around which all turns. For, in the Legs of Man, there is a huge image of the cosmic wheel of the British Isles being turned by an imaginary central office here on Ellan Vannin. Nowadays the Legs of Man always wear spurs and always run clockwise. But early representations of the Legs reveal a far less stylised spurless image which even occasionally ran widdershins, i.e. in the face of the sun.

ORDNANCE SURVEY NUMBERS

Balladoole: 95.246682
Ballingan: 95.327773
Cashtal yn Ard: 95.463892
Cronk Howe Mooar: 95.205697
Cronk Sumark: 95.393942
Keeill Reshkent: 95.296769
King Ory's Grave: 95.189677
The Mull Circle: 95.439844
St. Patrick's Chair: 95.315779

The outrageously named St. Patrick's Chair is actually an alignment of three Goddess stones



The early Christian keeill at Ballingan stands on the sun hill of Baal showing the relationship between early Christianity and sun worship

NOTES AT KEEILL ABBAN, TYNWALD HILL, ISLE OF MAN: 2ND APRIL 1997 CE

I'm sitting here as close as possible to the geographical centre of the British Isles. Yesterday, I came but did not record it, as All Fools' Day would have had an air of fakery to it. Instead, I return briefly before jumping on board a ship bound for the mainland and a great reunion with my divine babes…

DREAM LANG NOTES AT ST. PATRICK'S CHAIR, ISLE OF MAN: 1ST APRIL 1997 CE

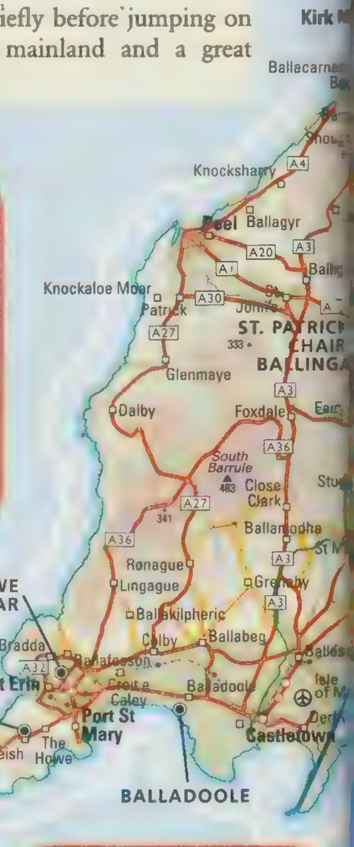
I see three pillars surrounded by a cairn of packing stones on a hill near Dream Lang and the village of Braaid. I see the beautiful hill of Slieau Chiarn at the south-west and … [the] beginnings of Christianity, on a sun hill in Bridgit's land near the Divine river. It all seems quite Pagan, as beginnings go. *Notes at Ballingan astounded: 1st April 1997* CE: [This is] a circular earthwork with a smaller central turret or pulpit with a megalithic entrance. It plays the part of a miniature Old Salem but claims to be an early Christian church. No small wonder then that, as John North writes, the early Christians were mistaken for sun worshippers. For Ballingan is a sun hill as in Baal…

Cronk Howe Mooar.

The Mull Circle.

HIGH NOTES ON BALLADOOLE, ISLE OF MAN: ALL FOOLS' DAY 1997 CE

Within this environment, it is shocking to see how Christianity fell so far into dominion over the land when its earliest believers seem to have been happily reconciled to their combination of ideals. Balladoole is a wonderful place, but saddened I am that it can no longer be this way.


Kirk
Ballacarna
Knockshar
A4
Peel
Ballagyr
A20
A3
A1
Knockaloe Moar
Patrick
A30
St Johns
ST. PA RICK
CHAIR
BALLINGA
333
A27
Glenmaye
A3
Dalby
Foxdale
A36
South Barrule
483
Close Clark
A27
341
Ballamodha
A36
Ronague
Lingague
A3
Grenaby
A3
CRONK HOWE MOOAR
Ballakilpheric
Colby
Ballabeg
Bradda
A32
Ballafesson
Port Erin
Croit-e-Caley
Balladoole
THE MULL CIRCLE
Port St Mary
Calf of Man
Cregneish
The Howe
Castletown
Isle of M
BALLADOOLE

The megalithic longship on Balladoole Hill.

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1 GORDON N. KNIVETON, *The Manx Experience*
2 BARBARA G. WALKER, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols & Sacred Objects*
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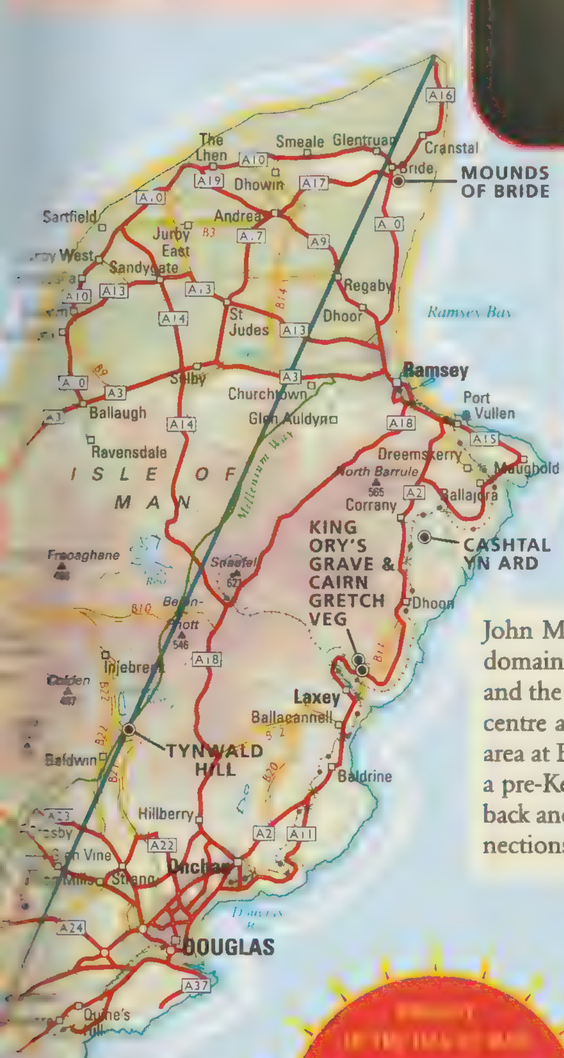
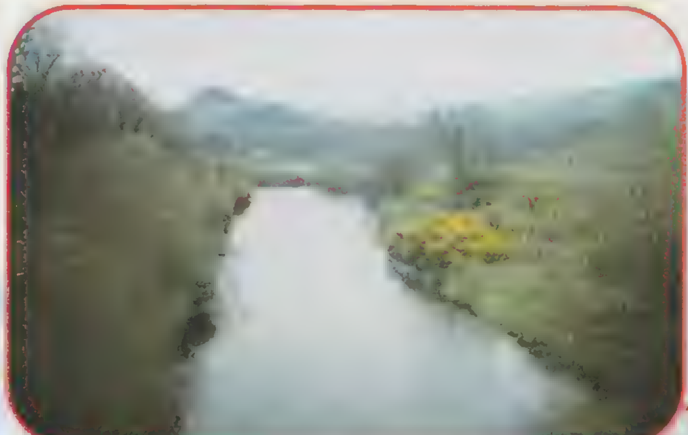
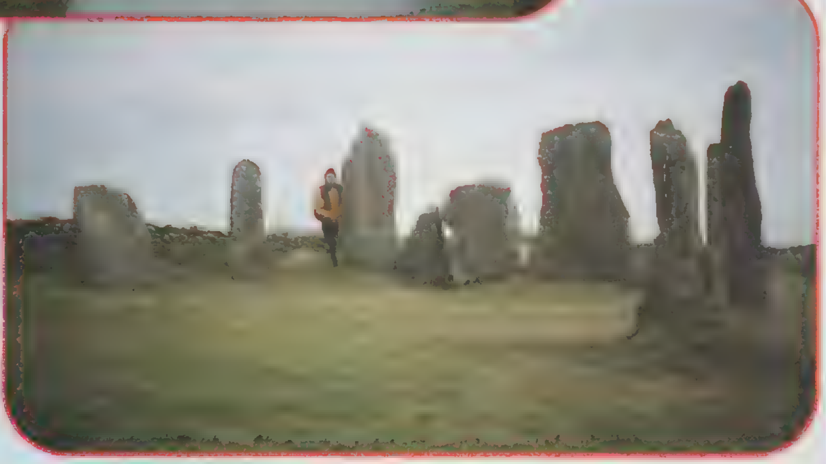
TERRY WELBOURNE, *Library and Personal Communications*


A16
The Lhen
Smeale
Glentruan
Cranstal
Bride
MOUNDS OF BRIDE
A10
A19
Dhowin
A17
A.0
Sartfield
Andreas
Jurby
B3
A.7
A9
A0
East
West
Sandygate
Regaby
A10
A13
A.13
B14
A14
St Judes
A13
Dhoor
Ramsey Bay
Ramsey
A0
Sulby
A3
A3
Churchtown
Port Vullen
A3
Ballaugh
A14
Glen Auldyn
A18
A15
Ravensdale
Dreemskerry
Maughold
ISLE OF MAN
Millennium Way
North Barrule
565
A2
Ballajora
Corrany
KING ORY'S GRAVE & CAIRN GRETCH VEG
CASHTAL YN ARD
Freoaghane
Snaefell
621
B10
Dhoon
Injebreck
A18
B11
Laxey
Baldwin
TYNWALD HILL
Ballacannell
Baldrine
Hillberry
A2
A11
A22
A23
Glen Vine
Strang
Onchan
A24
Douglas Bay
DOUGLAS
A37
Quine's Hill





LEFT: The sacred hill of Cronk Sumark stands on the river Sulby, both dedicated to the sun. Sumark is a landmark visible for many miles. **BELOW**: The grand megalithic forecourt at Cashtal yn Ard is reminiscent of that at Cairnholy 1 in Scotland.

John Michell has suggested that the peculiarly shaped Braddan was 'probably the domain of the Celtic high king', as it takes up the central area in which Keeill Abban and the original Tynwald Hill are situated. This leaves the Isle of Man with a Bridgit centre at at Bride, at the northern tip of the island, and a further Bridgit southern area at Bradda. But the preponderance of Norse names on this island suggests to me a pre-Keltic date – perhaps the mixing of the early races was a constant movement back and forth. Yet even in the sheading (a Manx parish) of Santon, the Bridgit connections arise at the Broogh, a prehistoric earthwork at 95.317743.

[illegible]

King Ory's grave.

BRIDE

Bride is a physical outpouring of the Great Goddess perceived by humans in her Bridgit state. All around from Ramsey north-west to Andreas the land is flat and uneventful. As we enter the area of Bride, mound-like hills appear and the cleft in the hills carries the road to a prehistoric mound which is built so carefully into the general landscape that the mapless pilgrim has no chance of its discovery. A half mile further down stands another similarly integrated mound. Bridgit is here in her total physical manifestation. Bride church is an indescribable Kelto-Viking affair standing on a heathen eminence at the meeting of three roads, clearly a former stone circle, and still a focal point of some note. Approaching Bride from the Andreas direction is probably the best idea, since the epic wailing blackness of Snaefell and her sister hills at the south-west sets up travellers for great things – instead they get Bridgit, the Goddess as Maiden, young, bountiful, promising greatness to the future.

Bride Church: 95.449013/Bride Mound 1: 95.448005/Bride Mound 2: 95.453008

Megalithic Ellan Vannin

The Neolithic peoples of ancient Ellan Vannin were on a constant trade route from Northern Ireland to Cumbria, and it seems likely that this ‘staging-post’ aspect of the Isle of Man caused the culture to become a repository for unusual ideas. At the south of the island on Mull Hill, sometimes known as Meayll, a ‘stone circle’ was built with all the aspects of outside culture fitted into its dimensions. As Aubrey Burl wrote in *Records of Stone*:

> ‘It is perhaps not coincidence that the only site on the Isle of Man anything like a stone circle is the unique ring at Meayll Hill [at 95.189677], a Neolithic oval of cists with entrances at north and south as though its builders had adopted some of the traits of the Cumbrian rings. There is proof of contacts. Nearly a third of the stone axes on the island came from the Langdales and it is likely that travellers from the Lake District used the Isle of Man as a staging post on their way to Ireland.’

The early Christian keeill at Ballingan.

The Mull Hill stones look down on the recumbent landscape figure of Bridgit in her guise as the rocky massif of Bradda, the stone circle orientated towards Bradda Head. Two miles north, just outside Port Erin, stands the great prehistoric conical mound known as Cronk Howe Mooar, whose name is a Vikingised Keltic of sorts. Cronk is a mutation of the Gaelic *cnoc*, (pronounced ‘krawk’). *Howe* is Scandinavian for ‘mound’, whilst *mooar* is Manx for ‘large’. This mound addresses the main figure of Bradda, with the tiny rock known as Creg Harlot, or ‘the Rock of the Harlot’, nestling beneath its cliffs. On the north-east coast, two fine chambered cairns stand in radically different circumstances. Ory’s Grave is below the farm at Cretch Veg. The other great megalithic chambered cairn here is Castal yn Ard, a magnificently placed temple overlooked by mountains on three sides, whilst on the fourth, the ground slides inevitably away down to the original entranceway on the beach at Port Cornaa. The fabulous megalithic forecourt at Castal yn Ard is full of large jagged-edged monoliths like a skeletal Cairnholy.[G] Castal yn Ard’s missing cairn is depicted on the ground by kerbstones. But though these are the best prehistoric remains to be seen, the nature of the Isle of Man allows for some anomalies of fairly Scandinavian proportions. Here is seen the extending of the megalithic idea from its Pagan roots in the forests and natural quarries of the Great Mother into the coming Keltic Christianity, which was, in its acceptance and use of magic, quite at odds with the Roman Church across the sea.

St. Patrick’s Megalithic Christianity

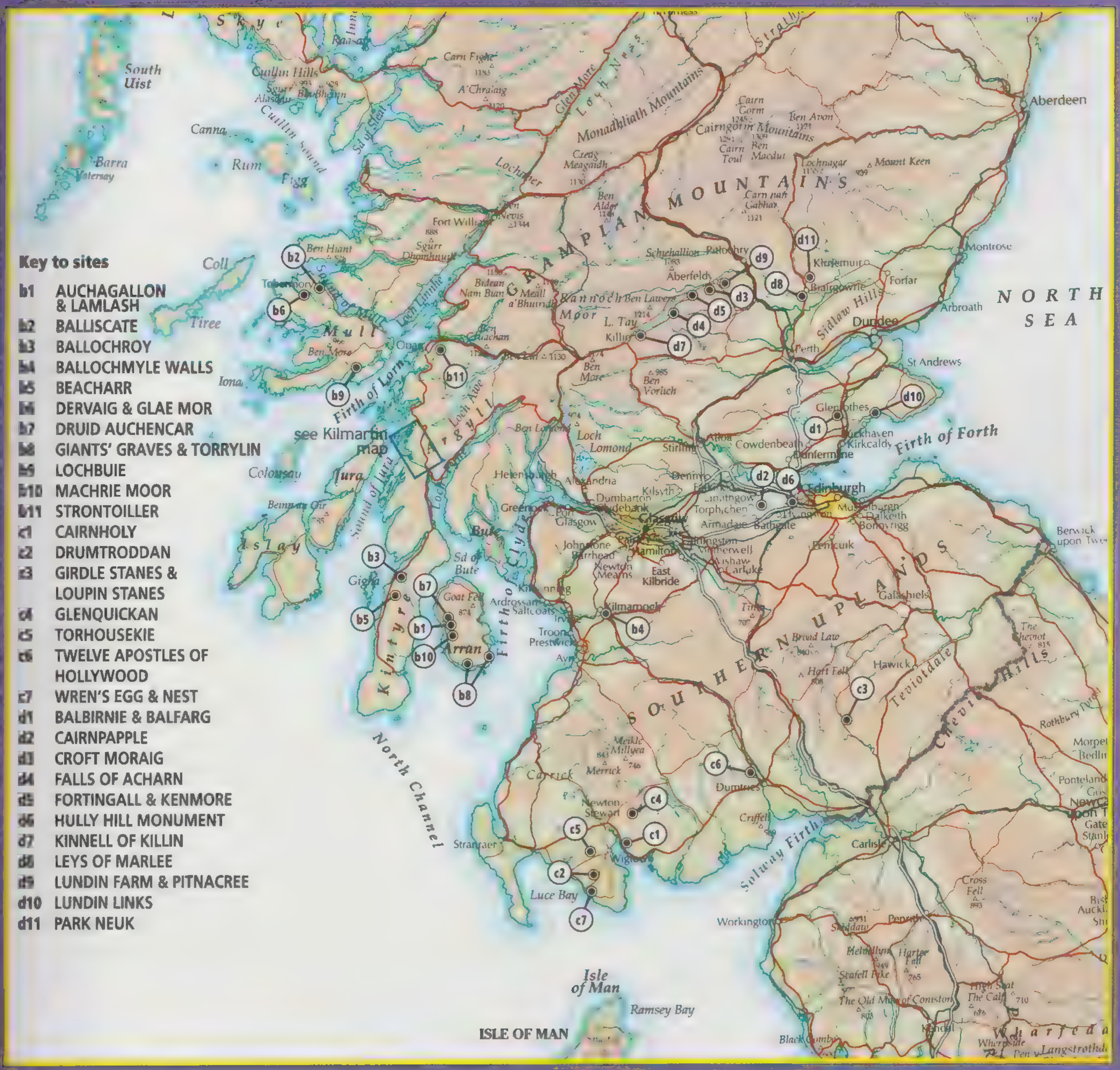
The early Keltic Christianity as practised by St. Patrick through to St. Columba was a righteous religion full of weight and compassion. The tough saints of the Keltic Church led not by the Book but by their own actions. They lived amidst their people and were all canonised by popular demand, unlike the saints of the centralised Roman Church, who are ratified only posthumously and only by the desire of each Pope. Like their individual attitudes to saints, the Keltic church worshipped in a manner more Pagan than Christian, much to the annoyance of the Roman Church, which considered these rustics almost as conspirators against their own religion. On the Isle of Man the chapels were called keeills and were often just a rectangular earthwork bank with softened edges. In the centre was a space for perhaps ten people to congregate, which was entered by a small megalithic entranceway. Frequently, the outer earthwork was circular, like a small henge. Keeills of all kinds abound on Man, each one slightly different. The strangest one is definitely on Balladoole Hill. Here, on one large flat-topped hill, stands a series of incongruous temples, each as bizarre as the next. First, a ship-shaped burial enclosure stands at the head of the hill. It is all fashioned out of low white quartz. To the right is a Bronze Age kist burial, followed by an ‘early Christian chapel’, as the plaque so carelessly puts it. To stand on Balladoole with that conflict of interests going on in harmony, I realised that Keltic Christianity had here got it temporarily right. In Britain, the attempt was being made to reconcile the conflicting and irrational forces of nature, whilst the Roman version of this new religion was essentially a city dweller cult bent on the removal of the uncontrollable rustic aspect. For example, faerie wells were highly acceptable to the Keltic Christians. In his *The Living Stream*, James Rattue has written: ‘Precedents on the Isle of Man suggest that some tree-wells were originally holy (Chibbyr Unjin at Marown, for instance, Moore 1894, 224). There are nine Ash Wells, and nine Holly Wells; seven Oak Wells and two apiece for Elder, Elm, Hazel, Maple and Nut; finally there is an isolated single Willow Well.’ When the Roman Church finally took over, it ruthlessly shut down all the holy wells as uncontrollable, renaming them *cunnus diaboli*, literally ‘devilish cunts’.[2] I had no time to visit holy wells during my Manx stay, but there is a revelation clearly waiting for the new investigator of these places. The most Pagan monument of all these early Christian sites is St. Patrick’s Chair itself. For this ‘chair’ is no chair at all, but a small alignment of three standing stones standing in a field cairn to the north of Braaid.

Tynwald

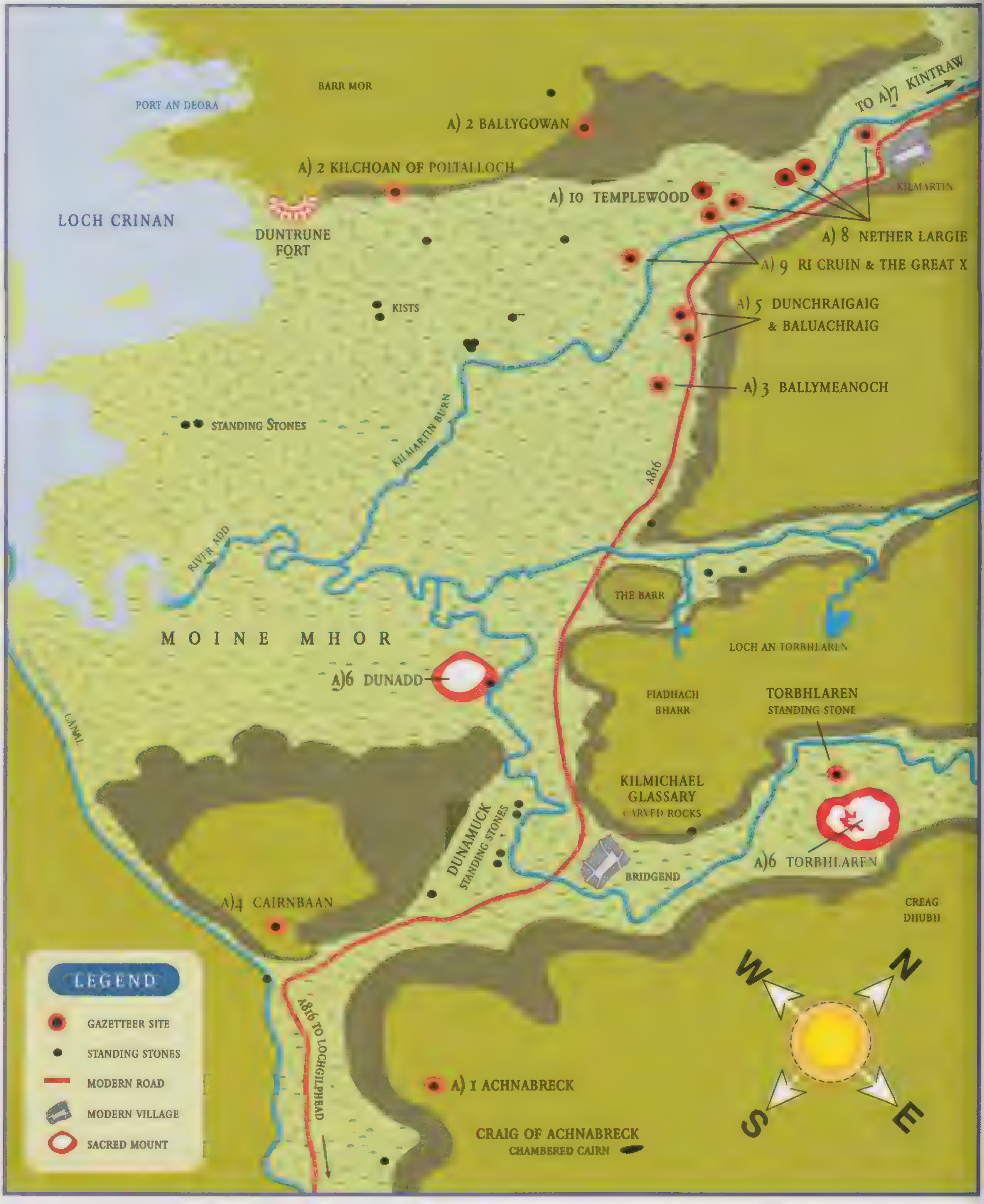
It was probably this continued use of megalithic and earthwork structures which allowed the Manx to sustain and extend their meaningful culture to encompass invaders and incomers, rather than have themselves swallowed up in some great invasion. The original Tynwald Hill at Keeill Abban was used for hundreds of years, and I visited the site on All Fools’ Day 1997 CE. From the great walled circle around the mound, the southern aspects of this remarkable island were quite astonishing, especially as the position of the Tynwald just allows a view of the great central Manx mountain known as Carraghan. Whilst the Tynwald was in session, a great bonfire would have burned upon the summit of Carraghan. The overwhelming feeling on the Isle of Man is one of the continuation of traditions far beyond those of the mainland.

six

Lowland Scotland

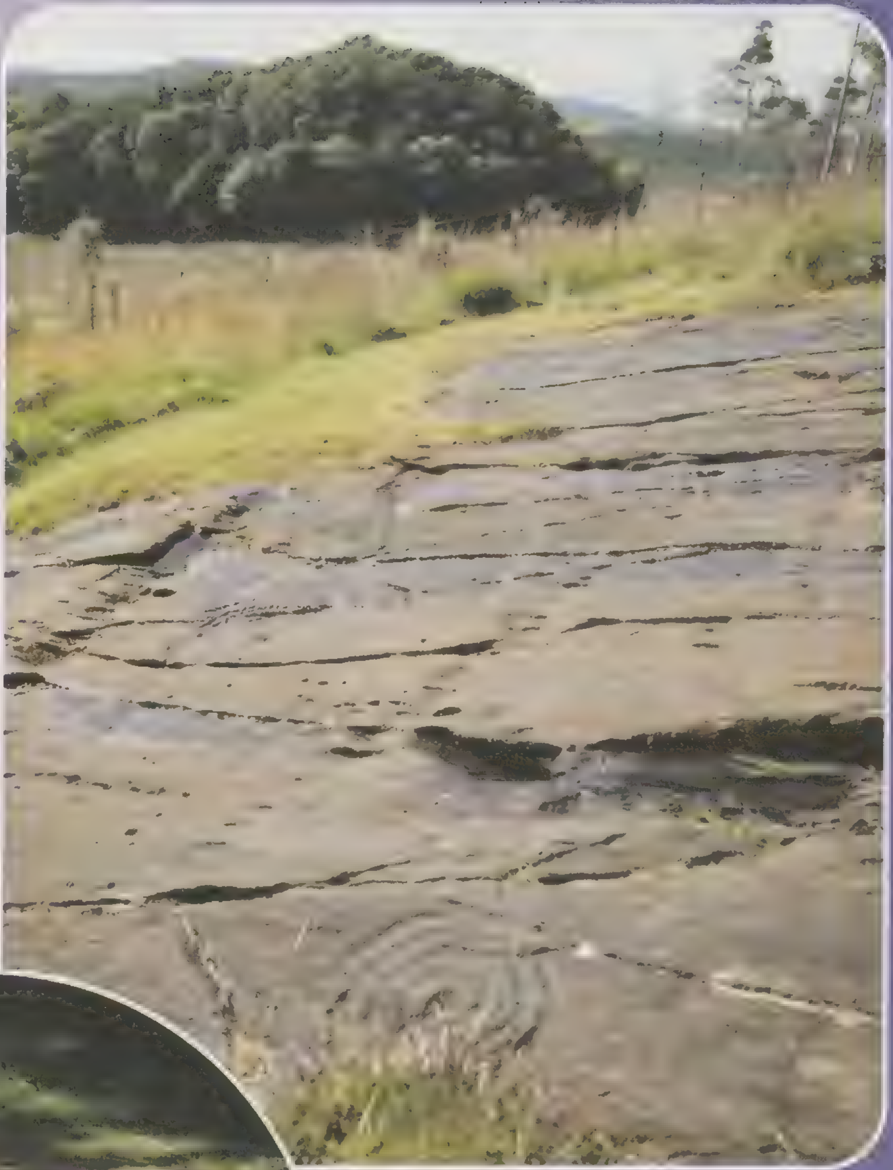

Key to sites
b1 AUCHAGALLON & LAMLASH
b2 BALLISCATE
b3 BALLOCHROY
b4 BALLOCHMYLE WALLS
b5 BEACHARR
b6 DERVAIG & GLAE MOR
b7 DRUID AUCHENCAR
b8 GIANTS' GRAVES & TORRYLIN
b9 LOCHBUIE
b10 MACHRIE MOOR
b11 STRONTOILLER
c1 CAIRNHOLY
c2 DRUMTRODDAN
c3 GIRDLE STANES & LOUPIN STANES
c4 GLENQUICKAN
c5 TORHOUSEKIE
c6 TWELVE APOSTLES OF HOLLYWOOD
c7 WREN'S EGG & NEST
d1 BALBIRNIE & BALFARG
d2 CAIRNPAPPLE
d3 CROFT MORAIG
d4 FALLS OF ACHARN
d5 FORTINGALL & KENMORE
d6 HULLY HILL MONUMENT
d7 KINNELL OF KILLIN
d8 LEYS OF MARLEE
d9 LUNDIN FARM & PITNACREE
d10 LUNDIN LINKS
d11 PARK NEUK
see Kilmartin map
GRAMPIAN MOUNTAINS
SOUTHERN UPLANDS
NORTH SEA
North Channel
Firth of Forth
Solway Firth
Aberdeen
Dundee
Perth
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Kilmarnock
Dumfries
Stranraer
Carlisle
Isle of Man
ISLE OF MAN

Kilmartin Area


PORT AN DEORA
BARR MOR
A) 2 BALLYGOWAN
A) 2 KILCHOAN OF POLTALLOCH
LOCH CRINAN
DUNTRUNE FORT
A) 10 TEMPLEWOOD
TO A)7 KINTRAW
KILMARTIN
A) 8 NETHER LARGIE
A) 9 RI CRUIN & THE GREAT X
A) 5 DUNCHRAIGAIG & BALUACHRAIG
KISTS
A) 3 BALLYMEANOCH
STANDING STONES
KILMARTIN BURN
A816
RIVER ADD
THE BARR
LOCH AN TORBHLAREN
MOINE MHOR
A)6 DUNADD
CANAL
FIADHACH BHARR
TORBHLAREN STANDING STONE
KILMICHAEL GLASSARY CARVED ROCKS
DUNAMUCK STANDING STONES
BRIDGEND
A)6 TORBHLAREN
A)4 CAIRNBAAN
CREAG DHUBH
LEGEND
GAZETTEER SITE
STANDING STONES
MODERN ROAD
MODERN VILLAGE
SACRED MOUNT
A816 TO LOCHGILPHEAD
A) 1 ACHNABRECK
CRAIG OF ACHNABRECK CHAMBERED CAIRN
W
N
S
E

Achnabreck

The cup- and ring-marked rocks of Achnabreck lie in three great elevated areas with wonderful views north-west across Loch Crinan, though one of the sites is in the womb-like environs of a fir wood. One hundred and thirty-five cups and rings, along with other carvings, make this sacred place the most impressive of all the Kilmartin carved rocks. The attraction of choices is giddying – multi-ringed cups; double, triple and horned spirals, some connected by grooves, and cups and rings of almost three feet in diameter vying for position across wide expanses of grained, channelled schist. Though the rocks are dazzling and roaringly hot in sunlight, they are even more wonderful when soaked to the core with rain. For it is then that the water courses through the deep channels, racing like blood through arteries, irrigating the fabulous carvings as it charges down the hillside.



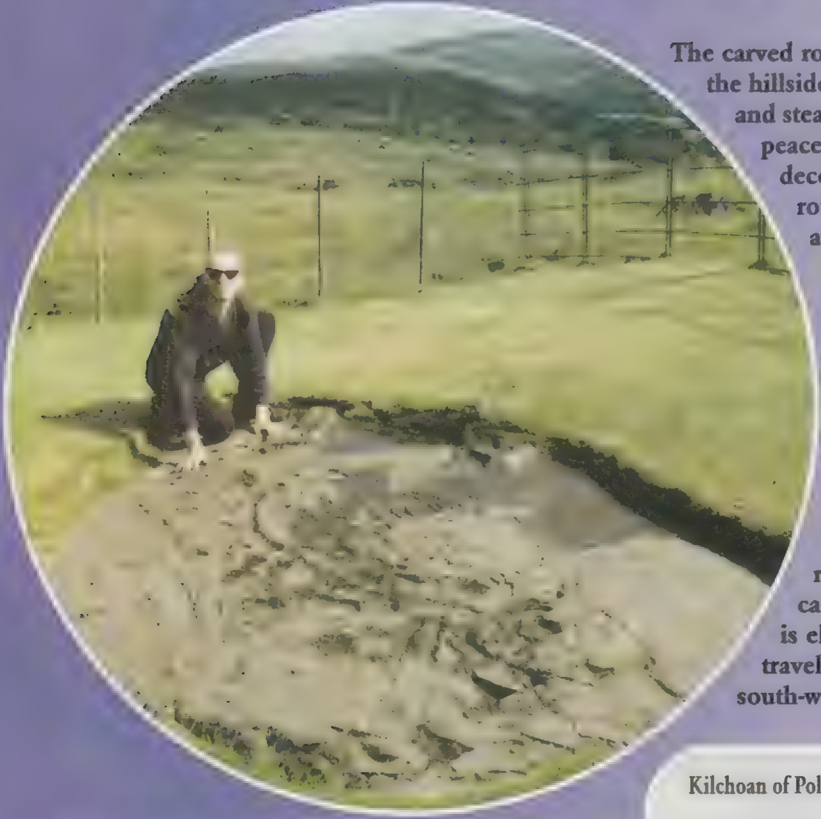
NOTES AT ACHNABRECK IN THE DAMP TREES, ARGYLL: 23RD AUGUST 1994 CE

I'm sitting on the huge outcrop of rock called Site Two at Achnabreck. These two separate places, linked by a brief forest walk, are amazing. Cup-marks, spirals, whirls and various mixes of arcane symbolism, all engraved into these natural rocky outcrops, conspire to make a sacred meeting place ... I sat at the other rocks and watched as the stream coursed over a great spiral, probably the biggest and most intricate one there. The rain came down fiercely for most of the morning, but now the trees are crackling with dripping rain and the midges are getting to me.

From Cairnbaan, travel down the A816. Take the first left turn and continue to the farm ahead. The carved stones are signposted from here.

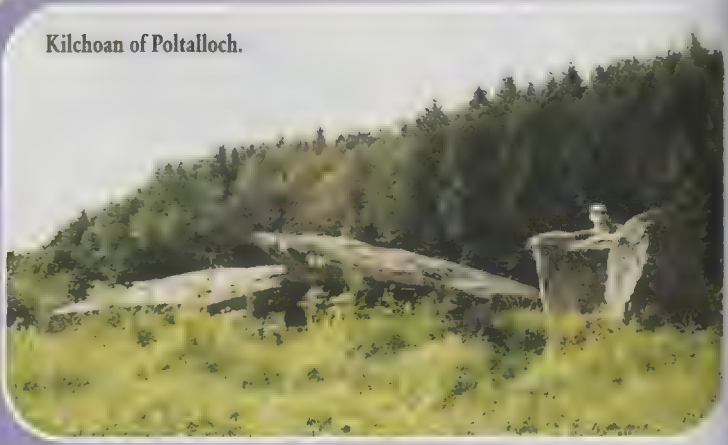
ORDNANCE SURVEY
55.(BAL)816978/(KIL)808966

Ballygowan Carved Rocks & Kilchoan of Poltalloch



The carved rocks of Ballygowan lie in front of the farmstead on the hillside high above Slockavullin. The climb uphill is slow and steady, but the view alone is worth the journey, for the peace is absolute. The inscribed rock is a small heavily decorated area of around eight feet by twelve feet, surrounded by a black railing in order to keep animals away. Ballygowan's fame is for the depth and clarity of her carvings, which include some unusual spirals and a horseshoe-shaped example of very exceptional quality. Some are linked together by equally deep carved channels. There are sixty cup-marks in all at Ballygowan, along with eleven cup- and ring-marks.

Kilchoan of Poltalloch stands in the lea of the great Druid Tree, beside the ancient trackway from Loch Crinan to Templewood.^G These great megalithic chambers most resemble the skeletal remains at Trefignath^G on Anglesey. None of the cairn material is here, but the position of the stones is elevated above the trackway, orientated to greet the traveller arriving from Loch Crinan. The long view south-west to Barr Ban is magnificent.



Kilchoan of Poltalloch.

NOTES AT BALLYGOWAN CARVED ROCKS, HIGH ABOVE SLOCKAVULLIN, KILMARTIN VALLEY: 25TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This is the most peaceful ancient site in the whole Kilmartin Valley. I'm so removed from any road up here that the only sounds are those of the buzzing flies and the distant gentle stream that flows into the tiny Loch Michean away to my west. The sun is high and the air is perfectly still today. The views all across the valley are spectacular in their greens of every hue and I am at a righteous peace here at Ballygowan. The carved rock is not large – a lozenge of exposed stone only eight to twelve feet across. But the carvings of spirals, cups and rings are truly formidable – deep carvings of many shapes, linked by deep carved channels. Today, all is heavily defined by the puddles after the intense rain and the dry rocks may have been symbolic and intended to catch the water in their cups, perhaps then to irrigate the rings in some way…

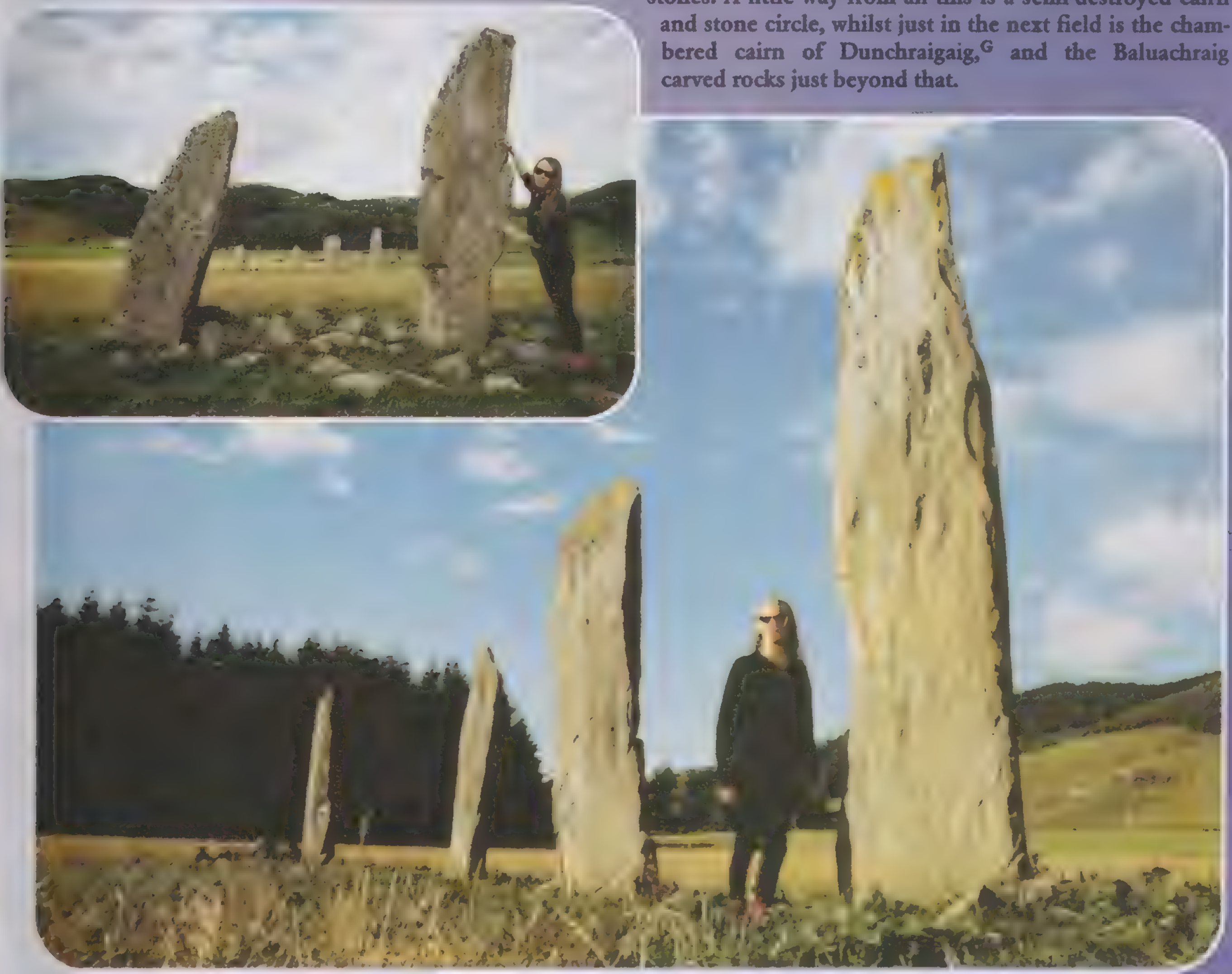
NOTES AT KILCHOAN CHAMBERS, POLTALLOCH, BARSLOISNOCH, ARGYLL: 26TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This great megalithic chamber is my favourite in the area. It is battered and cairnless, but has a life force within it that beats the state-care sites hands down … Kilchoan has raw power. And raw power pumps and courses through its surroundings … I watched the clouds pass overhead for twenty-five minutes, watching as they unfolded, all taking turns to black out the sun. Now the sun is high and strong and I am happy as it beats down on this ancient chamber.

These sites require an O.S. map.

Ballymeanoch

Sitting in the flat bottom of the high-sided Kilmartin Valley, the Ballymeanoch complex is complex – a ghostly shallow henge stands in the valley with a low cairn at its centre, once containing two kist burials. This low-banked henge leads to an alignment of standing stones which are arranged at three different stations. One large single menhir, now fallen, formerly stood, cup-marked and strangely grooved, as well as having a fist-sized hole drilled through its flattest side. About twenty paces away is an alignment of two standing stones very ancient and hoary, whilst further on about forty-five paces is another alignment of four large graded stones, approximately eight, ten, twelve and fourteen feet high, each one bizarre in a pre-historically futuristic way – a jarring alignment of four very rooted stones. A little way from all this is a semi-destroyed cairn and stone circle, whilst just in the next field is the chambered cairn of Dunchraigaig,^G and the Baluachraig carved rocks just beyond that.



NOTES AT THE HOLED STONE, BALLYMEANOCH, KILMARTIN VALLEY: 23RD AUGUST 1994 CE

This is a wild evening as the sheep go crazy in the next field. A cacophony surrounds me and here I'm a goner at Ballymeanoch. The great holed stone was once a tall upright, but it now lies forlornly, cup-marks up to the sky, yet another feature of this insane ritual complex. I came here at midnight, maybe closer to 1 a.m., and the ground frost electrified me. The sky was clear but my camera jammed and I freaked out for a few minutes. Then I realised that this was a moment. Not an eternal moment in the camera lens, but a true moment. I settled down after that and took in the opaque age and mystery of this particular megalithic setting. Just to my north is Dunchraigaig cairn, its womb chamber clearly visible and facing south-south-west. Above me the sky is many different colours and the clouds at the west may part any moment to let out the sun. Today I waded across the Kilmartin Burn to photograph the Great X.^G Ha! My Wellington boots became flooded but I struggled on. These Kilmartin standing stones are obsessive...

Enter via Dunchraigaig Cairn and pass directly to the stones along the field's edge.

6 a) 4

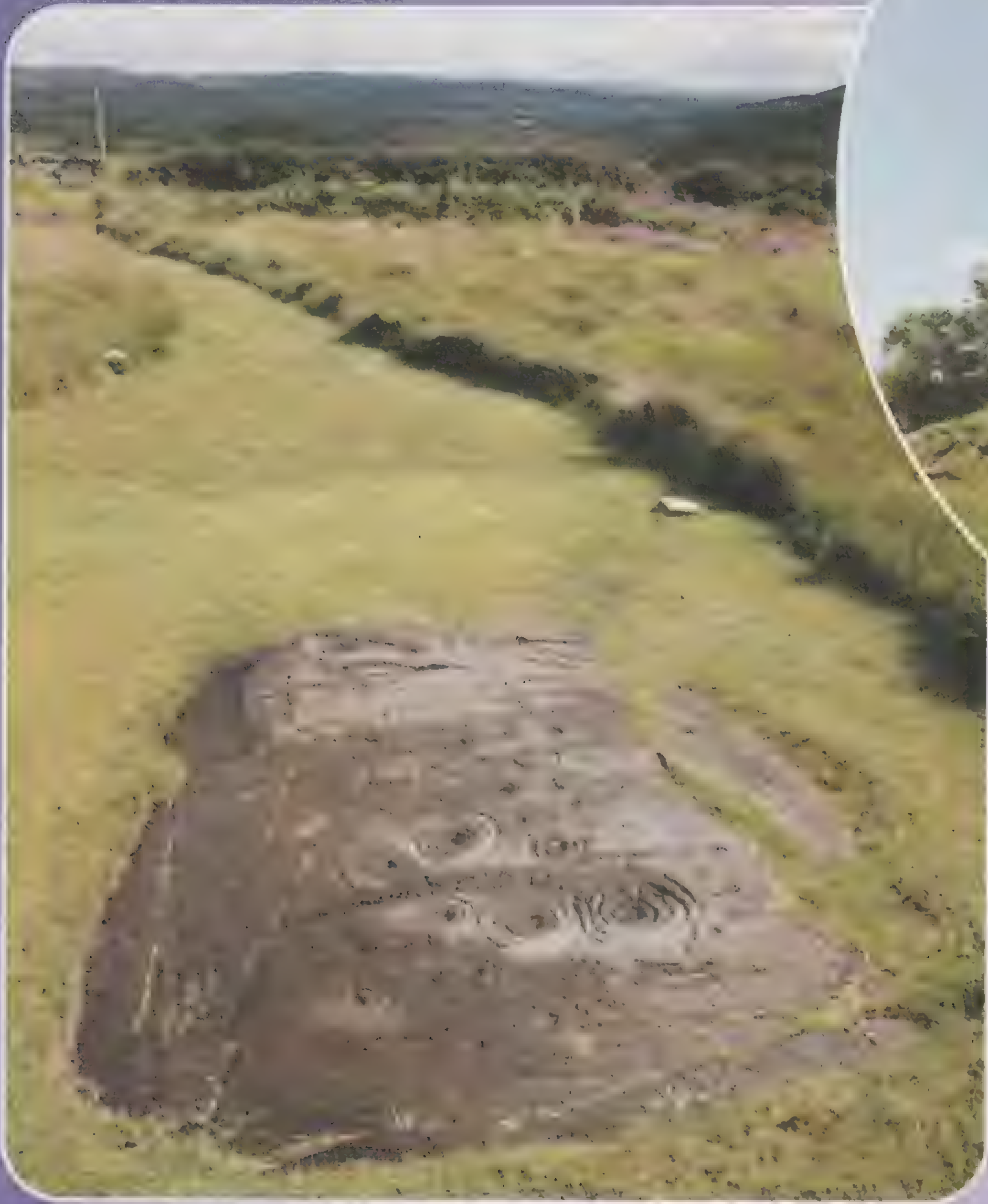
ORDNANCE SURVEY
55.839911

Cairnbaan

Fabulously sited on top of Cnoc na Moine, the rock sheets of Cairnbaan show views to Loch Crinan to the north-west and the town of Lochgilphead to the south-east. A profusion of cup- and ring-marked stones covers two separate outcrops, and many ringed carvings feature up to four rings. Deep natural channels on the rock surface add to the mystery of the archaic language of the rocks and some of the cup-marks are encircled by oval ring-marks.

CAIRNBAAN INSCRIBED ROCKS, CAIRNBAAN, ARGYLL: 23RD AUGUST 1994 CE

I arrived in blazing sunlight, the only moments of it this day thus far. High on top of the Cnoc na Moine, these cup- and ring-marks are beautifully situated looking southerly to the town of Lochgilphead, itself surrounded by the black-green forest of the Crinan Canal Valley. The two outcrops at Cairnbaan are far simpler carvings than those at Achnabreck, but they are much deeper (and possibly fresher) than those carvings. Now, the horizon at every corner is blue and sparkling, but a massif of black cloud towers over this hilltop, threatening another downpour any moment.



TOP: Dunchraigaig cairn.

LEFT: The carved stones of Cairnbaan are situated high on a hill above Dunamuck.

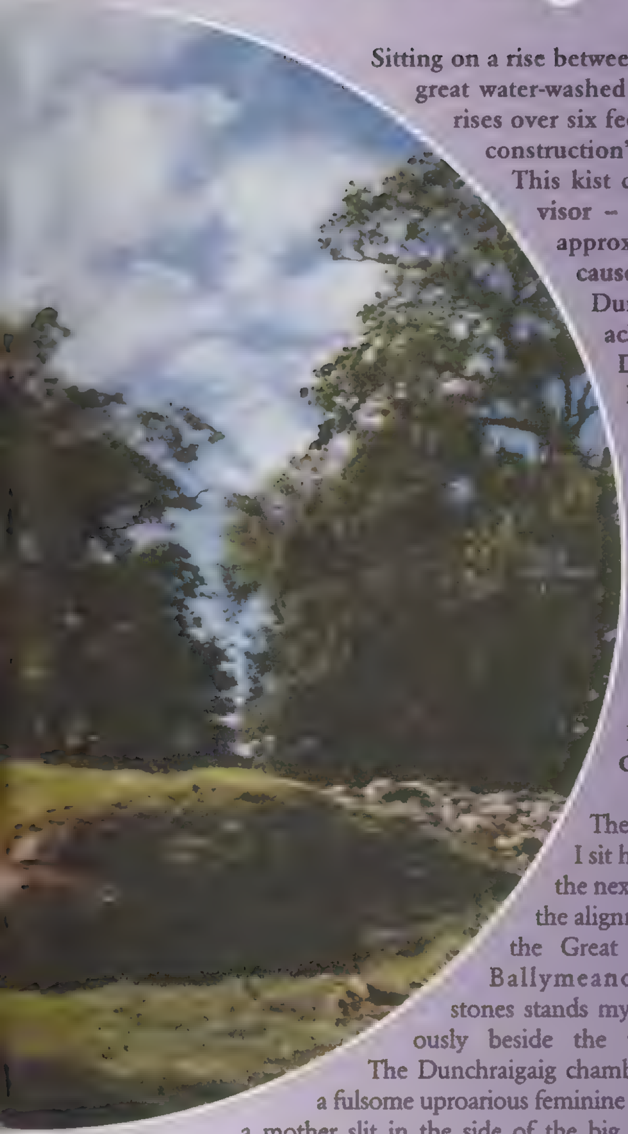
FAR RIGHT: The stones of Baluachraig stand close to Dunchraigaig near the local road through the Kilmartin Valley.

Cairnbaan requires an O.S. map or the Kilmartin map and an attitude.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
55.(DUN)833968/(BAL)832969

6 a) 5

Dunchraigaig Cairn & Baluachraig Inscribed Rocks



Sitting on a rise between Baluachraig inscribed rocks and the Ballymeanoch complex,[G] the great water-washed pebbles of Dunchraigaig create a fine Neolithic cairn, which still rises over six feet tall. Canon Greenwell discovered 'a chamber of unusual boulder construction' over seven feet by three-and-a-half feet in both width and height. This kist chamber has an enormous capstone like a gigantic megalithic sun visor – inside no grave goods were discovered, though inhumations of approximately ten people were found. The 1929 excavation by J. H. Craw caused the stones of the cairn to become very spread out, but Dunchraigaig still presents a fine site. The cup- and ring-marks of Baluachraig are situated along the A816 about 200 yards north of the Dunchraigaig cairn, on an outcrop of rock overlooking Kilmartin Burn, with very beautiful views. There are carvings of 130 cup-marks plus a further thirty-two cup-marks with one or two rings around them. All are in extremely good condition and situated within an iron railing to protect them from cattle. The rocks were carved as they were, without preparation. In her otherwise 'sensible' guidebook *Prehistoric Scotland*, the archaeologist Ann McSween bizarrely suggests that 'maybe the rocks were "tattooists' shop windows" where a prospective customer could chose a design'. It is interesting to imagine the reaction to this suggestion had a non-archaeologist made it!

NOTES AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE DUNCHRAIGAIG CHAMBER, KILMARTIN VALLEY: 23RD AUGUST 1994 CE

The south sky is a beautiful optimistic blue with woolly breeze clouds, while I sit here with the drops and the drips of the downpour that just moved on. In the next field, sheep and lambs baa on and on and on, and in the field after that, the alignment of the Great Four Ballymeanoch[G] stones stands mysteriously beside the trees. The Dunchraigaig chamber is a fulsome uproarious feminine cleft, a mother slit in the side of the big cairn belly. The great capstone that holds all the structure in place protrudes from the inside like megalithic labia and the chamber of a Neolithic cairn has never before been quite so inviting or so sexual… But then this valley is a fertile gift and .. luscious green grass … carpets every possible acre. I talked to some children from Kilmartin primary school earlier today and was envious of their upbringing in such an environment.

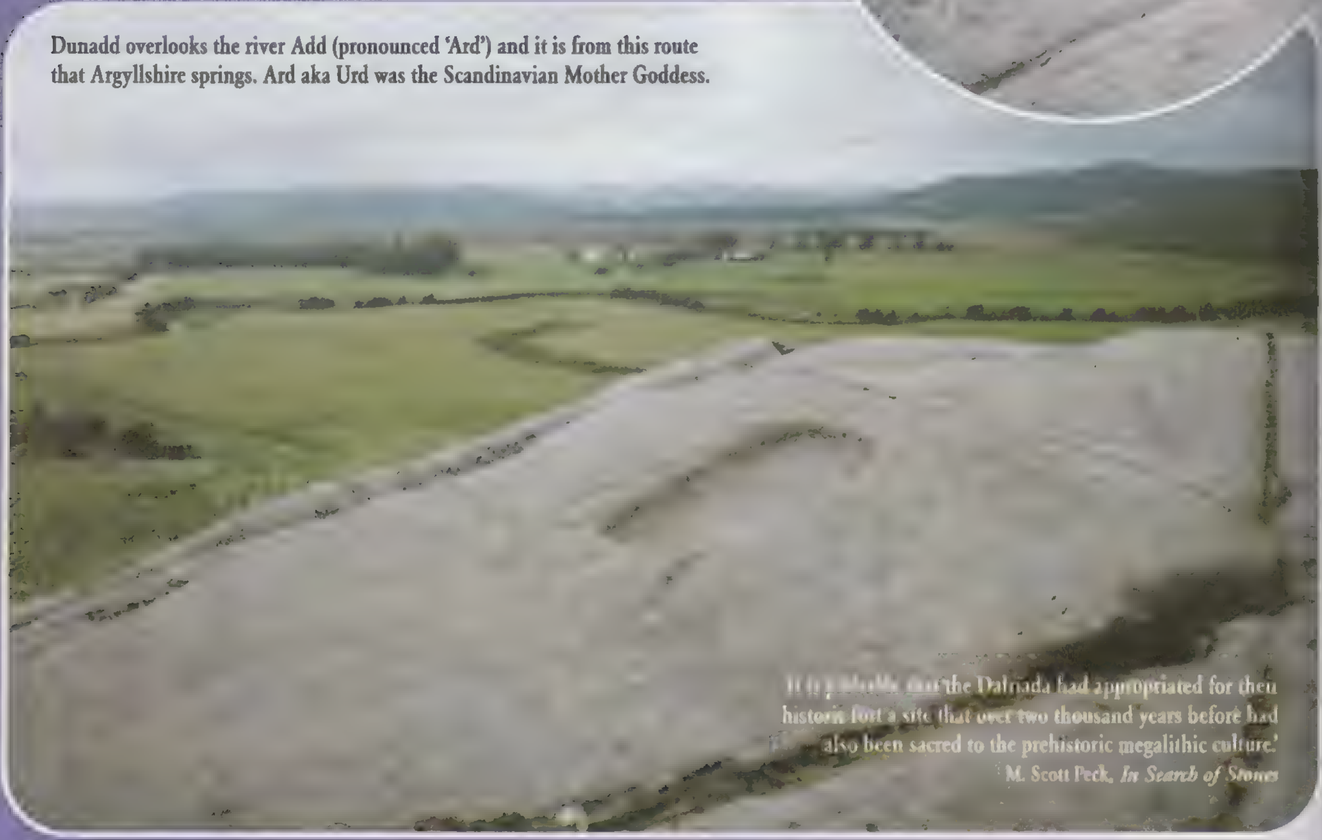
NOTES FROM BALUACHRAIG INSCRIBED ROCKS, KILMARTIN VALLEY: 25TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This plateau of carved stone is damp today. When I arrived in bright sunlight the other day, newly mown grass clung to the carvings like tea leaves which looked as though they wanted to be read. The view across the Kilmartin Valley is blissfully peaceful this afternoon and the children are just coming out of school across the other side of the valley – I can see mothers passing with excited kids in the back of their cars. A [illegible] military vehicles just passed Baluachraig, but nothing [illegible]ly destroy this peace.

See Kilmartin map. Both sites stand close to the A816. In most road cases

Dunadd & Torbhlaren

Pronounced 'Doon-Ard and Tor Vlarren'. There is a sacred hill along the river Add, looking out to Loch Crinan where the first people came through. If you stand at the top and look hard, you can see every new route the river has taken. Dunadd is most famous for its 7th-century reign, and as the home of the Scottish king it was beseiged by the Picts in 683 and 736 CE. There are Dark Age carvings of a footprint and a boar at the summit of the hill, but the true significance of Dunadd is as a Neolithic hill altar like Blakey Topping,[G] or Dunnydeer stone circle.[G] There is a sister hill to the east along the river just about two-and-a-half miles. Torbhlaren is a similar sacred hill and rises in the Add Valley north beyond Kilmichael Glassary. The Torbhlaren Observatory stands in the north-western lea of the hill. It comprises a stupendously cup-marked standing stone around six feet tall, narrow but very broad. This stone is aligned on the summit of the hill along with a cup-marked observatory on a low outcrop of rock thirty yards to the north.



Dunadd overlooks the river Add (pronounced 'Ard') and it is from this route that Argyllshire springs. Ard aka Urd was the Scandinavian Mother Goddess.

'It is probable that the Dalriada had appropriated for their historic fort a site that over two thousand years before had also been sacred to the prehistoric megalithic culture.'
M. Scott Peck, *In Search of Stones*

NOTES AT DUSK IN THE RAIN AT DUNADD, CRINAN BAY: 25TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This is the greatest view in Argyllshire. The view to the west is formidable, looking across the Loch Crinan entrance where the first people arrived. High on top of Dunadd, it's wild to think of the sacredness imbued in this hill by the Ancients who first dared to climb it – this prominence defying the flatness all around it and surveying the serpentine river which winds its way past and off into the hills. Only Torbhlaren beyond Kilmichael is similar in this area. Indeed, that too was deified similarly, but … Dunadd screams uproariously from every angle. Now the rain is heavier than the view and I must leave…

See Kilmartin map. Dunadd is off the A816 beyond the Kilmichael Glassary turn. Torbhlaren is on the Kilmichael Glassary road, beyond the village a mile or so. Dunadd is in most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
55.830050

6 a) 7

Kintraw

The great observatory at Kintraw is situated on a winding *Italian Job*-style road at a tight bend on the edge of the Creag nam Fitheach, just as it drops steeply away into the Barbreck Valley river mouth. Kintraw is a wonderful but controversial site, for it is here that a megalithic test case was made for and against ultra-precise archaeo-astronomy. A great standing stone and a large cairn stand upon a powerful eminence of land. Within the cairn a kist with a capstone was discovered, divided into two compartments by a large stone slab, and cremated bone was discovered here. From the huge amount of quartz on the site, it is likely that the crystals were intended to make the monuments shine, as was the case at the Thornborough Henges.[G]

Alexander Thom believed that the stone at Kintraw was used to mark the winter solstice sunset as it set into a notch in the Paps of Jura twenty-seven miles away. Thom's biggest problem was that the sighting platform from which the great stone would have been viewed was in an outrageous position, on the other side of a treacherously steep valley. The archaeologist Euan McKie excavated at Thom's predicted spot and found evidence of a platform. He wrote:

> 'The problem with this site was that an intervening hillside actually prevented an observer from seeing the foresight from the backsight. Professor Thom suggested that an observer could climb up the steep hillside behind the site, in order to see over the obstruction, and actually found what appeared to be a sheep track in the required observing position. The ledge was subsequently excavated, and petrofabric analysis indicated that the ledge was indeed man-made.'

Others have argued that McKie, a Thom believer, interpreted naturally compounded materials as human intention. Unless there was some kind of bridge across that gaping chasm, the fortuitous matching of the two horizon notches seems, frankly, incredible. But logic and the world always were an unsuitable couple.

KINTRAW NOTES FROM THE CAIRN: 25TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This great site reconciles all the important aspects of megalithic Man. For here, overlooking Loch Craignish, he brought together the sun, the water, the mountains and the heavens in one fabulous moment. This is the great solar observatory that Alexander Thom discovered – a wild and visionary discovery that megalithic Man was using the stones to observe and predict the paths of the great sky gods. Here today, the notch in the promontory to the left is well-defined but the clouds are covering the Paps of Jura, making photography of the notch impossible. But that makes no difference, as Kintraw is a spectacular site and a perfect place to hang out all afternoon. The sun is beating down as I sit on this huge cairn. I shall return to seek the platform behind, but today I am happy here.

The great Kintraw stone is visible beside the A816 about five miles north of Kilmartin, as the road descends into a tight tyre-screeching bend after the long mountainous climb.

6 a) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
55.SEE BELOW

Nether Largie Cairn Cemetery

The Nether Largie cairn alignments are a beautiful series of round convex mounds, each slightly different from the next and excavated and displayed to accentuate the best aspects. The site works in a formulated antiquarian way. The oldest of the cairns is at the south, a Clyde cairn constructed on the floor of the valley. It was excavated by Canon Greenwell in three days during October 1864, producing the large passageway and chamber which are now covered up. Greenwell reported that the megalithic partitions in the passageway were thirty inches tall, but so silted have they become that the stones now protrude only five inches or so above the surface. The middle two cairns on the alignments had only kist burials with no finds, but a carving of an axe and a single cup-mark were found on the slab stone at the northern end. Nether Largie North has no chamber but its 1930 presentation is dramatic and clever. Visitors descend into the cairn where they see a wonderful carved kist sunk within the floor. Over ten axehead carvings can be counted, along with forty cup-marks on the underside of the capstone. Further north is the Glebe Cairn, a large chamberless monument on this same alignment.

EXHILARATED NOTES AT THE MIDCAIRN OF NETHER LARGIE, KILMARTIN OF ARGYLL: 22ND AUGUST 1994 CE

[illegible]

CIRCULAR INSET: Inside the northern cairn.
MAIN PHOTO: Looking south to the Great X,G from Nether Largie South.

SUBTERRANEAN NOTES DANGLING MY FEET IN THE GREAT VAULT OF THE CHAMBER AT NETHER LARGIE NORTH CAIRN: 22ND AUGUST 1994 CE

Here the plot elevates one more notch…! I'm in the great rebuilt chamber… The sarcophagus, a great stone box beyond any mere kist, was covered by a huge elaborate capstone, covered in cup-marks and all facing downwards once the interment was complete… The Kilmartin Valley is a place to visit many times before I die.

THE GLEBE CAIRN:
55.[illegible]
NETHER LARGIE NORTH:
55.[illegible]
NETHER LARGIE
CENTRAL: 55.[illegible]
NETHER LARGIE SOUTH:
55.[illegible]

See Kilmartin map. In most road atlases.

Ri Cruin & the Great X of Kilmartin

Ri Cruin is a polite circular pancake cairn of large water-washed stones set in a perfect antiquarian wood. There are three kists all without grave goods – the central kist has a half-open capstone and the large kist at the edge of the cairn features a carving of seven axes. Ri Cruin stands on the great two-and-a-quarter mile alignment from Kilmartin church to the standing stone of Kilmartin Burn. The cairn was excavated on two unmemorable occasions, by Dean Mapleton in 1870 and J. H. Craw in 1929, which probably accounts for the vast reduction in the size of the original cairn.

North-north-east along the line about half a mile away, a Great X formation of standing stones rises up in a field opposite the Templewood stone circle.[G] At each end of a north–south alignment are two sets of stone around ten feet tall, and both sets have cup-marks upon them. But it is the central axis stone of the Great X which is most beautifully carved. For this nine-foot stone features forty cup-marks, including three rings partially surrounding them.

[illegible]

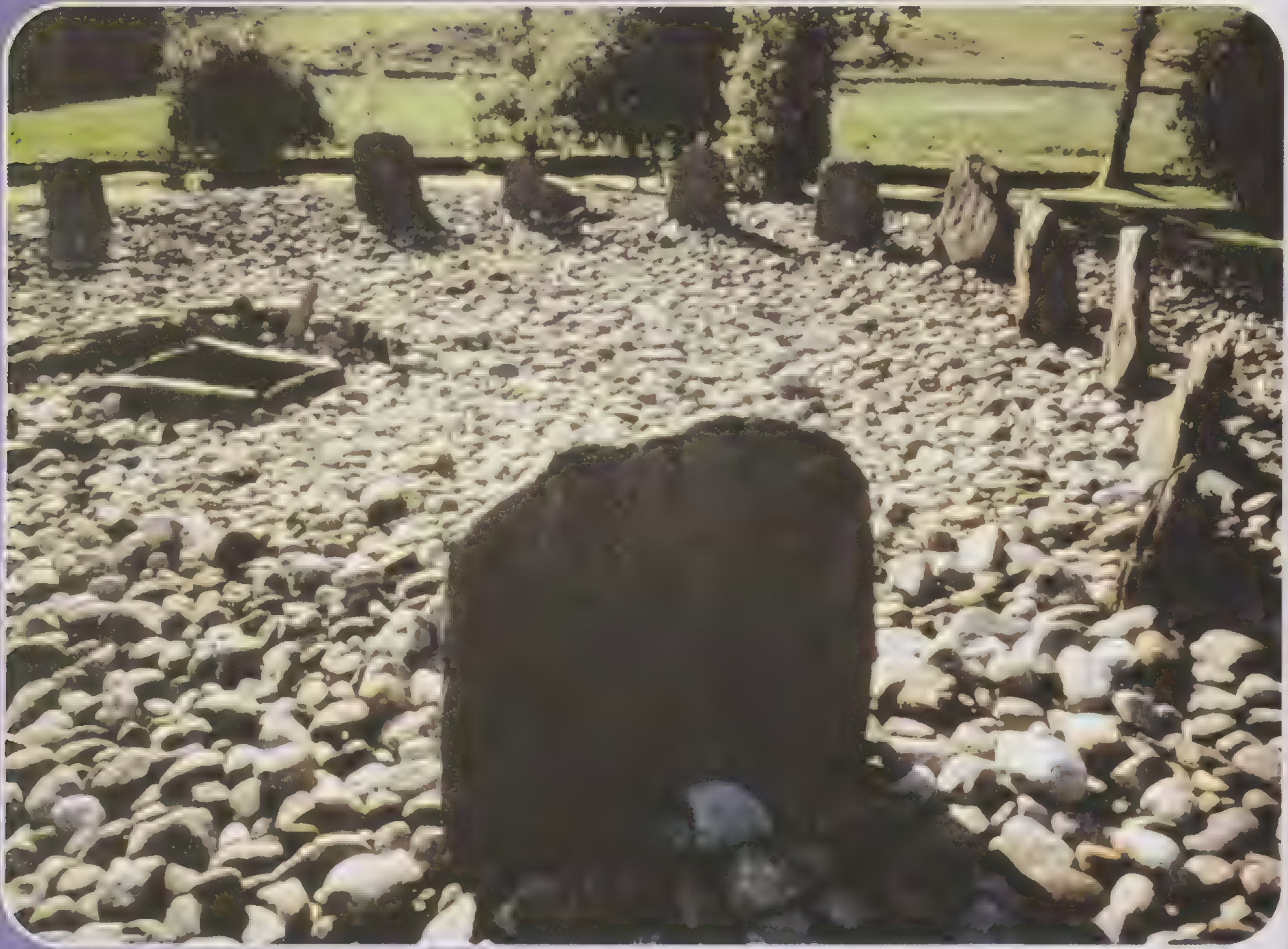
THE GREAT X-NOTES AT THE FOOT OF THE MOST SOUTH-EASTERLY STONE: 22ND AUGUST 1994 CE

Along with the Ballymeanoch stones,[G] these are my favourite of all the Kilmartin stones… A great setting of five stones forms the Great X and the central stone is hugely cup-marked on its southern face; I will count the marks on my way back. There is a small setting of stones at the southern foot of the centre stone, plus an outlier at the north-west. This is smaller than the others and is aligned to the two northern stones… It's a shame that these sites are not more easily visible or reachable… The Great X is not so impressive as the Ballymeanoch stones purely because of the size and the spread of the stones. It will be difficult to photograph this place. But the Kilmartin Valley is truly a place of myth. I am here and I am happy.

See Kilmartin map. In most road atlases.

Templewood

The pristine state of the land around Templewood, aka Half Moon Wood, was not always the case. Paintings of the 18th century show a wild tempestuous landscape far from the verdant valley floor of today. Templewood's site is one of the longest recorded uses of an area. Next to the famous stone circle are the remains of one of the earliest stone circles of all, dated around 3500 BCE. Carbon-dating has proven the stone circle's use right up to 1050 BCE, by which time the site had become a cemetery. What the modern visitor sees at Templewood is this final phase of development. But Templewood began life as a twenty-stone circle of local schist. Aubrey Burl has suggested that the obsession with the north–south axis is shown in the use of chlorite schist for the upright at the north and south stations. At some time, an intermediary phase of the monument, a drystone wall was inserted between each standing stone and two small kists were built within their own revetted cairns. But all this was later torn down and the visitor sees a magnificent and wonderfully bright site.



NOTES FROM TEMPLEWOOD ON A RAINY AUGUST DAY: 22ND AUGUST 1994 CE

I have seen Templewood in three kinds of weather: clear blue sky, full moon at midnight, and now in rain and a gentle breeze. Certainly this is the best way to view these 5,000 years all at once. For Templewood on its ancient trackway from Loch Crinan is a startling place and needs to be sprinkled with a little of the elements in order to damp down the restorers' enthusiasm. Although the cairn is too neat and the little wood with its notice boards is weekender tweeness, the overwhelming feeling at Templewood is of an incredible age, of beauty in quiet and of a wonderfully slow age. One of the stones is marvellously sculpted, its spiral thrice underlined and its colour completely changed by the rain. Last night in the full moon of a clear midnight, I was awe-struck by the shining boulders; the moonlight lit the whole area and the circle looked radioactive. Templewood is a strange place. At first it appears to be prim, but soon this is only modern hang-ups showing through. Underneath is a monument of vast splendour.

See Kilmartin map. In most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
69.(AUCH)894346/(LASH)019334

6 b) 1

Auchagallon Cairn & Lamlash Stone Circle

On the west coast of the Isle of Arran in a magificent position overlooking Machrie Bay stands the strange and remote cairn circle of Auchagallon. This unexcavated monument was once a small circle of fifteen large stones with a diameter of around fifteen yards standing on a high flattened terrace of land. But some time in the Bronze Age, a large cairn was deposited upon the circle, covering the standing stones right up to their 'necks', and leaving a bizarre and intriguing mystery. This was clearly an area of prehistoric importance, for Auchagallon stands in an area of hut circles and other stone circles, but the Machrie Wood to the east has now overwhelmed them all, leaving this large cairn-circle very isolated. Local legend has it that the stone circle was a free-standing affair until recently, whilst the archaeologist Graham Richie has suggested that the cairn may have been added to in comparatively recent times. Yet this turf-covered site is so balanced in its general shape that is difficult to imagine such soil management having been done without the utmost thought and intention. Perhaps we must wait for excavation, though that seems a tragically extreme option. The monument is now in state care and has fabulous views across the Kilbrannan Sound to Kintyre.

At Lamlash, though much reduced from its original size, this originally seven-stone circle retains a wonderful balance because the stone robbers unintentionally left it looking like a four-poster. The low stones are all made of the local granite, which shines amidst the purple heather, whilst the largest stone of the site is a huge fallen boulder. About twenty paces to the south is a four-foot outlier. The archaeologist James Bryce excavated a stone kist in the centre of this circle on 28th September 1861. Flints, fragments of bone and black earth were discovered, but Bryce reported: 'Exposed in this elevated spot to the full fury of the south wind and force of the pelting rain, our men could hardly keep their footing, yet did they work away bravely till I had fully explored the rude cist.' In the 1800s, the very idea of returning on a more sensible day was quite out of the question – why, a whole other site could have been explored in that time!

NOTES SHELTERING FROM THE WIND AT AUCHAGALLON STONE CIRCLE, ISLE OF ARRAN: 24TH AUGUST 1994 CE

The stones of this circle have been covered, almost to the neck in some cases, with cairn material that gives the effect of a buried temple. High on the ridge overlooking this beautiful bay, Auchagallon changed my attitude towards the term 'cairn-circle'. The stones are huge! One is a typically buried Machrie Moor-type,[G] its weathered fanned top like a megalithic sheaf of darts. Up here today, the weather is warm, the wind is inspiring. I'm in a semi-trance state, flipping out completely. Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha!

Auchagallon is on most road atlases. The village is so tiny that the circle is visible set back on its semi-cliff. Lamlash, on the other hand, requires both an O.S. map and determination.

Balliscate Stones

High above the quaint idyllic port of Tobermory stand the mighty Balliscate Stones. These two large eight-foot pillars are all that remains of a former large stone circle which ringed this levelled area and would have been an impressive sight. In 1946, the veteran archaeo-astronomer Alexander Thom surveyed the stones of Balliscate, calling his report *Sketch of a Site near Tobermory*. Balliscate overlooks Calve Island to the east, and the sea beyond Auliston Point to the north-east is the main channel leading out to the Inner Hebrides. The land around the stones is often waterlogged, even in summer, but there is plenty of dry ground on which to relax.

NOTES AT BALLISCATE STONES, MULL: 20TH AUGUST 1994 CE

I'm crouching on a soaking boggy ridge high above Tobermory, taking in the awe-inspiring aspect of 360-degree beauty from this here former stone circle. For these two huge stones are all that remains of the formerly fabulous Balliscate circle. Yet so powerful are the remains, and the placing of those remains, that the 8 a.m. wind is not piercing, just life-giving and peaceful. Ha! Of course, my feet are soaking – I thought idealistically that such a day would not require Wellingtons. Big Joke – it's a soaking scene this morning. Last night the sky was cloudy for the nearly-full moon, though she did make a dash through the clouds just long enough for me to wave. But these destroyed Mull circles would have been something else. I'm really tranced out by their size and most of all [by] the huge natural amphitheatre that the scene creates. The ancestors must have been jumping up and down when they found this place.

Balliscate Stones require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
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Ballochroy

At Ballochroy on the west coast of the Kintyre peninsula stands a famous alignment of three great stones and a remarkable stone kist. This monument is magnificently placed on a raised fertile slope overlooking the sea on the Sound of Gigha with an incredible twenty-mile north-west view between Ardpatrick Point and Gigha Island to the Isle of Jura. The three stones are hoary and impressive in their great age. The smallest is just over six feet, the largest over eleven, but they are all wide slabs and the collection they make together is arresting. These stones attracted great interest in the great Alexander Thom debate over the precise intentions of archaeo-astronomy. Thom claimed that, from certain stones in the alignment at Ballochroy, the midsummer sunset over Corra Bheinn and Cara Island. Many people agreed with Thom, until an antiquarian print from 1700 drawn by the antiquary Edward Lhuyd, in his posthumous *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands*, showed that a huge cairn had formerly stood over the kist, directly on Thom's projected sunset line. This cairn, an enormous pile known as Carn Mor, would have made the viewing of the sunset impossible. Aubrey Burl has noted that the cairn on the neighbouring farm is eighty feet long and twelve feet high, yet goes by the name Carn Beg, meaning 'the little cairn'. Burl uses this information to suggest that Carn Mor, 'the big cairn', was a giant. The midsummer alignment could have been a symbolic or spirit line consciously hidden by the erection of the cairn. Certainly, Aubrey Burl has explained that the solar alignments were not the only important possibilities here at Ballochroy, and has suggested that lunar observations could have been made from the site, and that people 'may have been constructing quite inventive megalithic settings to combine both solar and lunar events'.

NOTES AT LAST FROM BALLOCHROY, NORTH KINTYRE: 26TH AUGUST 1994 CE

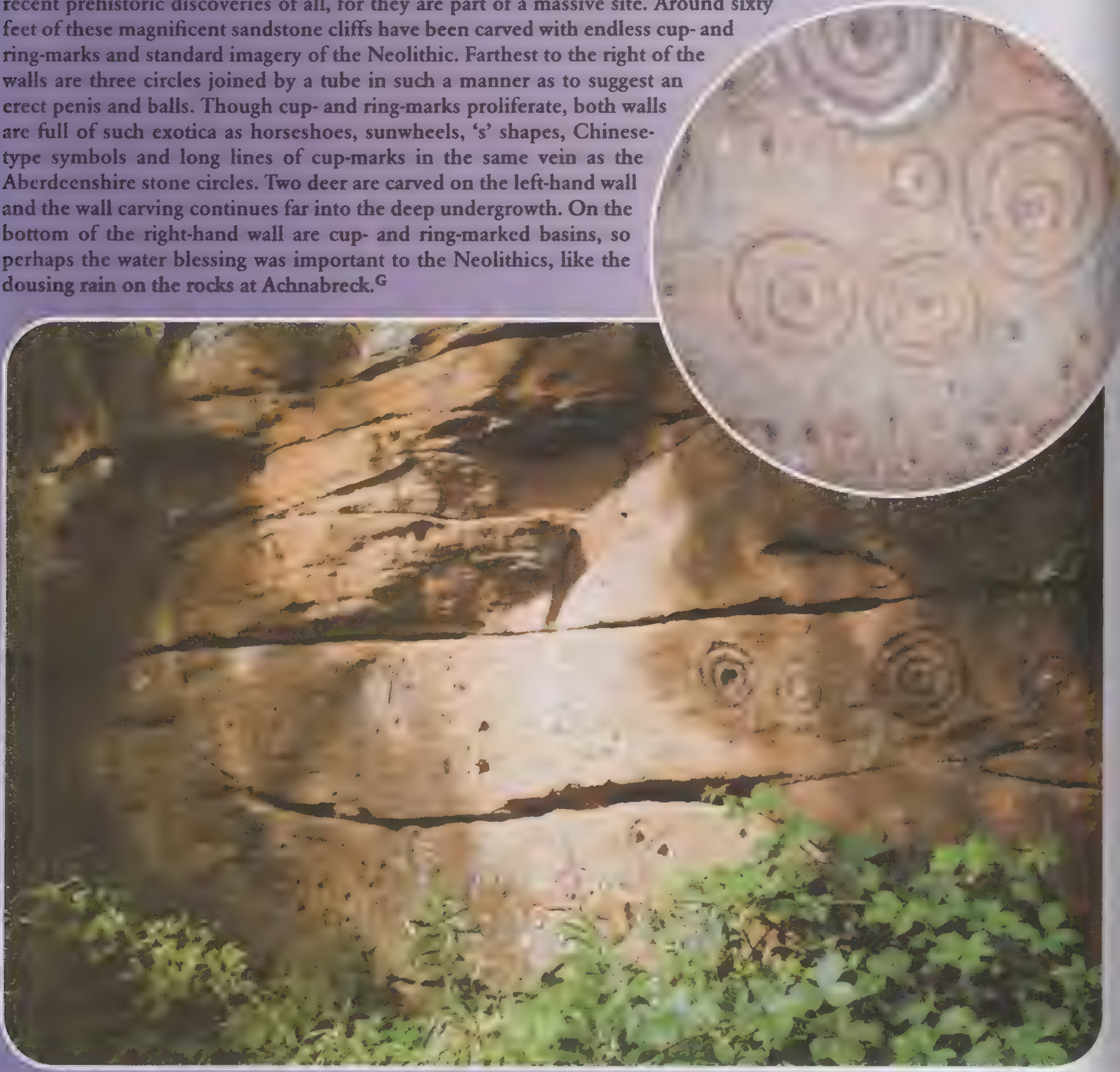
Well, I'm here. And though the western horizon is now entirely gone, twenty minutes ago it was a clear vista all the way. I'm sitting at the base of the largest bulkiest centre stone on the flat packing stone, trying to take in this site. Ballochroy is very difficult to find on this fast road. There are no signs and I'm on my own, so I passed the obscure farm turning twice before my intuition told me which one. And there they were – the three great stones on a clear shelf in a field full of sheep and with a beautiful and complete kist away to the south-west exactly forty paces from the nearest stone. Now the horizon is back once more, but the weather changes so fast here that it really is quite a trip to keep up with it all…

Ballochroy requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
70.512255

Ballochmyle Walls

In 1986, a local man out walking his dog in the fertile fastness of the Ayr Valley, between Kingencleugh Castle and Ballochmyle golf club, noticed strange carvings on the cliffs above his head. The carvings looked archaic but were hidden behind several square feet of thick vegetation, which he proceeded to pull away from the cliff-face. Gradually, as he pulled back more and more of the overgrown creepers, it dawned on the man that he had discovered a very important prehistoric carved wall and Historic Scotland was alerted. Ballochmyle Walls have some of the greatest recent prehistoric discoveries of all, for they are part of a massive site. Around sixty feet of these magnificent sandstone cliffs have been carved with endless cup- and ring-marks and standard imagery of the Neolithic. Farthest to the right of the walls are three circles joined by a tube in such a manner as to suggest an erect penis and balls. Though cup- and ring-marks proliferate, both walls are full of such exotica as horseshoes, sunwheels, 's' shapes, Chinese-type symbols and long lines of cup-marks in the same vein as the Aberdeenshire stone circles. Two deer are carved on the left-hand wall and the wall carving continues far into the deep undergrowth. On the bottom of the right-hand wall are cup- and ring-marked basins, so perhaps the water blessing was important to the Neolithics, like the dousing rain on the rocks at Achnabreck.^{G}



NOTES FROM BALLOCHMYLE WALLS, NEAR KILMARNOCK, AYRSHIRE: 31ST AUGUST 1996 CE

In the moist verdant pulsing glen where the walls stand bold and overflowing with arcane carvings, I feel as though the past never left this place. The gorgeous cliffs of sandstone, like 200 Long Megs^{G} conjoined, are situated in such extreme luxury of plant and insect life that it is easy to imagine this place to be some lonely and epic forest. Raspberries and blackberries grow in huge damp bushes and the epic on the walls disappears at times behind great impenetrable brambles.

Ballochmyle Walls require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
62.693433

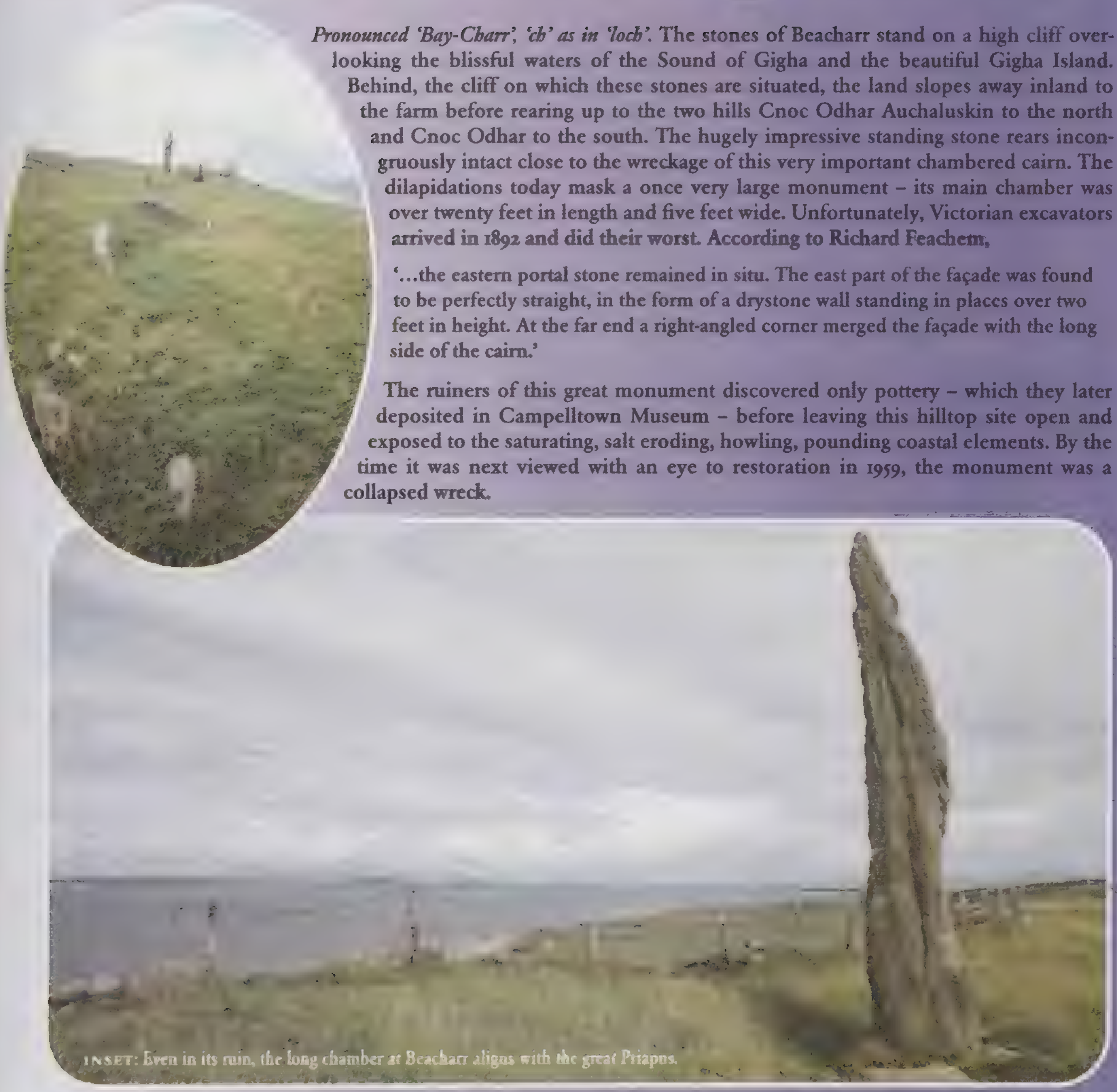
6 b) 5

Beacharr Chambered Cairn & Standing Stone

Pronounced 'Bay-Charr', 'ch' as in 'loch'. The stones of Beacharr stand on a high cliff overlooking the blissful waters of the Sound of Gigha and the beautiful Gigha Island. Behind, the cliff on which these stones are situated, the land slopes away inland to the farm before rearing up to the two hills Cnoc Odhar Auchaluskin to the north and Cnoc Odhar to the south. The hugely impressive standing stone rears incongruously intact close to the wreckage of this very important chambered cairn. The dilapidations today mask a once very large monument – its main chamber was over twenty feet in length and five feet wide. Unfortunately, Victorian excavators arrived in 1892 and did their worst. According to Richard Feachem,

> '…the eastern portal stone remained in situ. The east part of the façade was found to be perfectly straight, in the form of a drystone wall standing in places over two feet in height. At the far end a right-angled corner merged the façade with the long side of the cairn.'

The ruiners of this great monument discovered only pottery – which they later deposited in Campelltown Museum – before leaving this hilltop site open and exposed to the saturating, salt eroding, howling, pounding coastal elements. By the time it was next viewed with an eye to restoration in 1959, the monument was a collapsed wreck.



INSET: Even in its ruin, the long chamber at Beacharr aligns with the great Priapus.

BEACHARR NOTES ON THE COAST IN HIGH WIND, NORTH KINTYRE: 26TH AUGUST 1994 CE

I'm sitting on one of the stones of the destroyed chambered cairn, high up on the hillside overlooking Gigha Island and especially the weird and wonderful Cara Island, which looks like a sleeping figure just three miles out to sea. The chamber, or what is left of it, is orientated SSW–NNE and all is overshadowed by the king menhir which dwarfs me in its quartzed splendour high on this hilltop. The clouds of this day are arranged in spectacular perfection all across Gigha, miles to my west on the black horizon.

Beacharr requires an O.S. map.

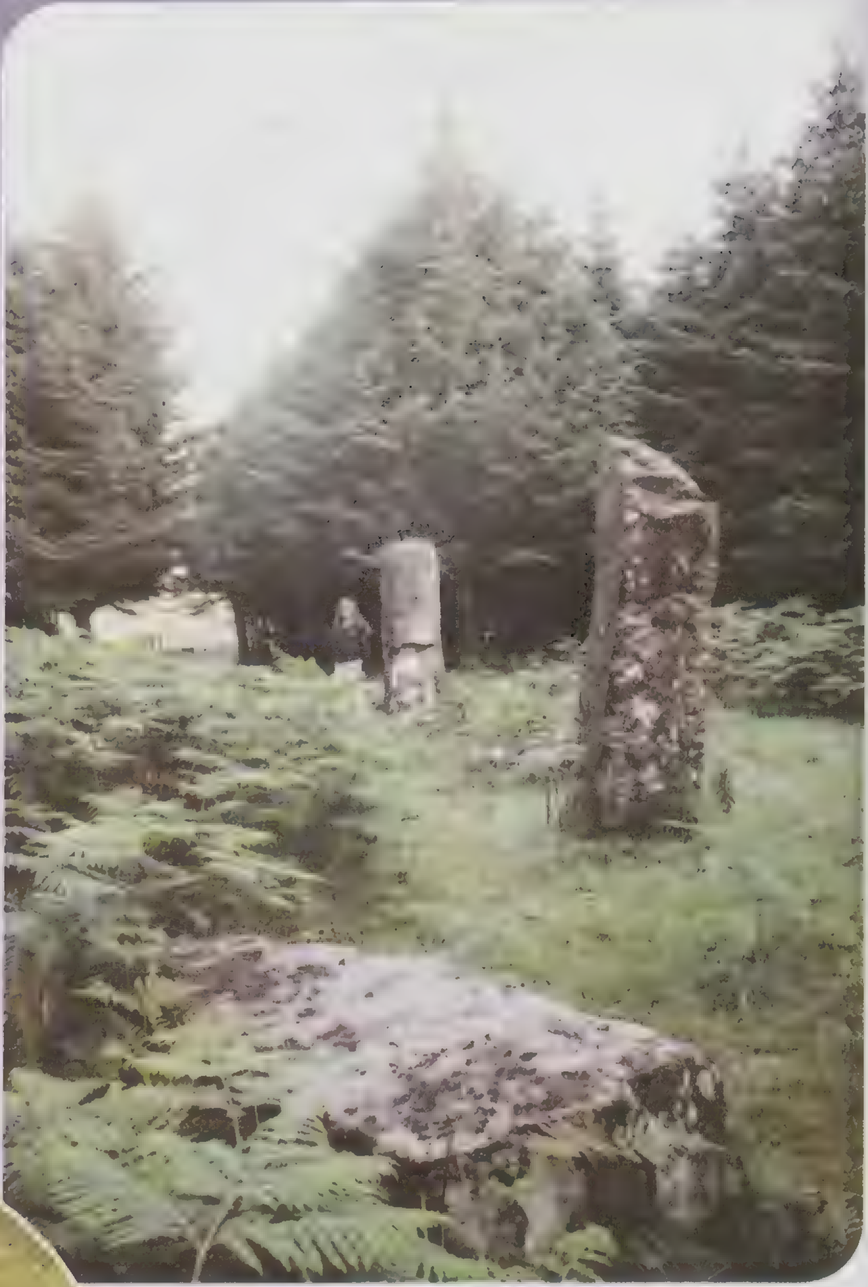
Dervaig & Glac Mor

Now hidden in modern forestry, the Dervaig alignment was originally built on this Maol Mor, or great bald mountain, with the intention of having stunning horizons. Five great stones originally stood here, but only two remain upright, each one a grand pillar of seven feet plus. Alexander Thom and his son Archie surveyed this site and noted that the alignment pointed:

> '...to a notch in the south-east and very nearly shows the rising moon at the major standstill but for this the horizon altitude seems to be a little high... To the north the horizon seems to be slightly high to show the moon setting at the major standstill but as seen from the extreme south of the line it might be about right.'

But whilst the Thoms were being scrupulously fair and conservative in their judgements, it is fair to say that the Neolithics were likely to have been 'quite casual in their orientation', as Aubrey Burl puts it in his *From Carnac to Callanish.*

At the bottom of the hill, close to the burial ground, three great stones now stand hemmed in by field walls, but they have a clear view of open fertile countryside and it is a superb position. These stones of Glac Mor, which means 'the Great Hollow', were set to align upon the the major south moonrise, and they nestle within the luxurious vegetation on a shelf leading down to the beautiful Loch a'Chumhainn.



Glac Mor.

NOTES FROM DERVAIG STANDING STONES, MULL: 19TH AUGUST 1994 CE (AT SUNSET)

Two huge standing stones remain in this ferny forest on this wonderful summer night. The mystery of the modern forest is supplanted by the question: is this a circle or an alignment? The stones are huge but appear to have fallen in a wide arc, belying the alignment claimed for them. Then again, they may have been moved thus. Whatever, the placing on this high mountain top is fabulous and though the Forestry Commission wood is new, it lends an air of gentle eternity to the place. Above the stones about one mile or so are the remains of another stone circle deep in the forest. Ha, we have not time to visit that place – but we are here and that's enough.

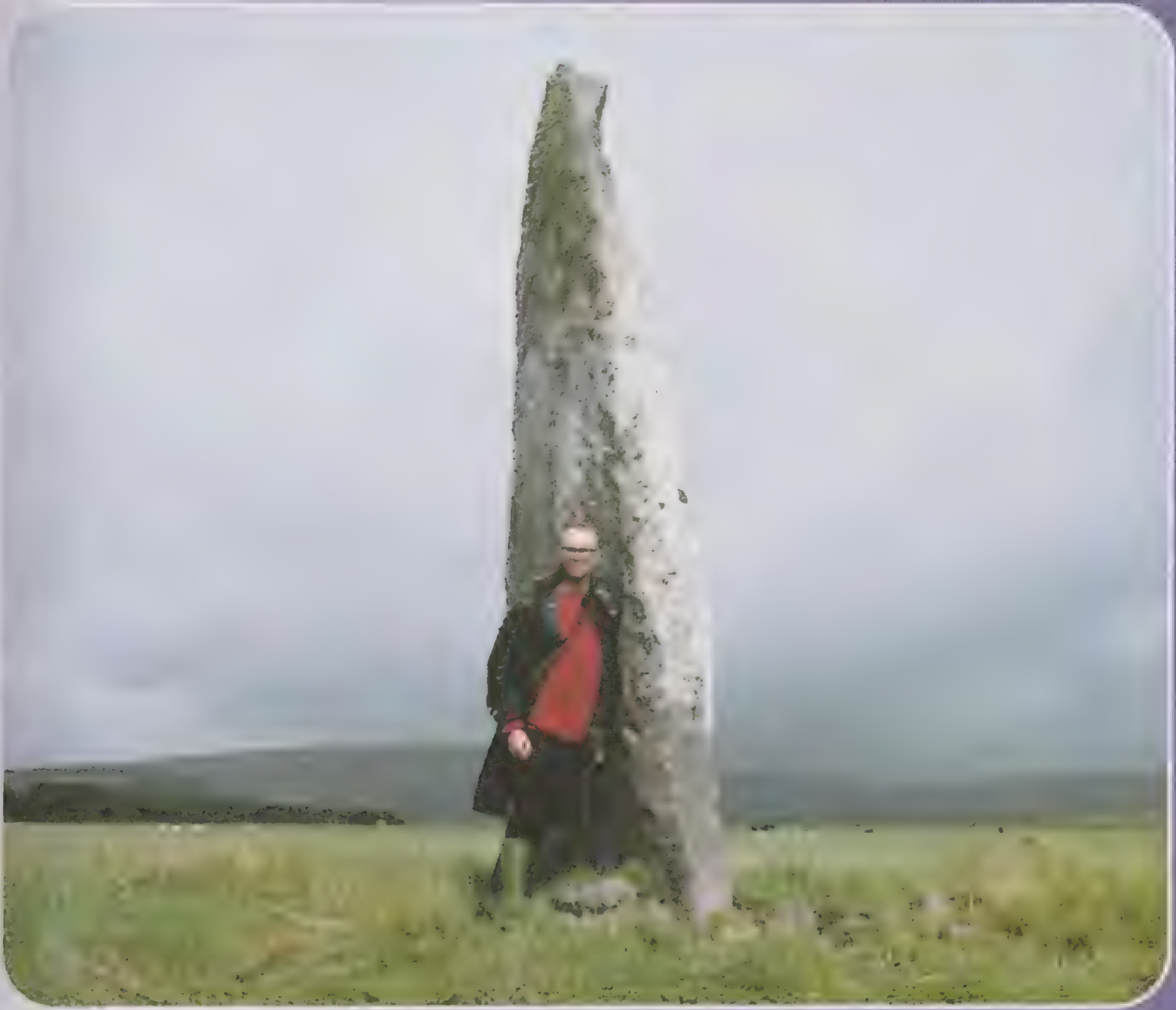
Dervaig requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
69.891363

6 b) 7

Druid Auchencar

On the Arran west coast, overlooking the Kilbrannan Sound, two enormous standing stones once shot out of the ground like rooted megalithic spikes. Nowadays, one of these stone phalli lies flat upon the wet ground, but its stupendous brother remains over sixteen feet tall and thrusts skyward, as beautiful and impressive a standing stone as any. From their shape and enormous size, these stones would once have rivalled the largest on Machrie Moor.[G] To the near north is the valley of Iorsa Water, and the stones stood upon low land gently enclosed by the hills of Choire Moir to the south-east, Beinn Lochain to the east and to the north Cnoc a'Choire Beag. Check out the nearby house which looks as though it has been reclaimed by the Brothers Grimm. It is just called Druid, and its demeanor is as removed from nowadays as the mysterious Delling house at the Mother's Jam[G] on Fyfield Down, in Wiltshire.



DRUID AUCHENCAR – NOTES IN SHEEP POO, ISLE OF ARRAN: 24TH AUGUST 1994 CE

I'm sitting on the enormous recumbent stone at the foot of the huge sister stone rising high over the western coastline of Arran. The weather is different on all sides and we're freaking out. The menhir is a fabulous slab of who knows how many feet tall, standing on a platform of heavy stones – once an important and special place. Now, the fallen stone lies shattered, but even so the outrageousness of this place could not be lost by even the most casual traveller.

The great standing stone rises up on the right as the traveller passes along the A841 north of Auchagallon.

6 b) 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY
69.(GIANTS)044246/(TOR)955211

Giants' Graves & Torrylin

At the south-eastern tip of Arran, south of Whiting Bay, in the general tourist walks along the beautiful Glenashdale Burn, stand the two great chambers of Giants' Graves. The walk is a tough twenty-minute uphill climb and no-one should attempt to make a hurried visit. Though now heavily denuded, both structures are the potent remains of what was a Clyde–Carlingford chambered cairn. The large stones create an effective megalithic skeleton, standing in modern forest upon an ancient hillside.

Bennan Head is the southernmost tip of Arran, and its views south dramatically send the visitor's eyes towards a magical hill in the middle of the sea some way away. This is the legendary Ailsa Craig, also known as Paddy's Signpost. The importance of the great cairn at Torrylin is its dramatically-placed south-facing chamber which is orientated directly at Ailsa Craig. Once a huge oval mound with four separate chambers, the state of the site is now one of considerable disrepair, since it has suffered many times at the hands of over-enthusiastic 19th-century excavators. The most recent excavation was finished in 1900 by the veteran Arran excavator James Bryce, who discovered the remains of six adults, along with pottery and a flint knife. The bones of otters were ritually deposited at Torrylin because this animal was a totem of the Goddess Ta, as we see in the folktale *Tarka the Otter*. This literally means 'Tarka the O'Ta'. The fabulous positioning of the cairn ensured that the Ailsa Craig device would have dramatically increased the sense of pilgrimage to the cairn.

Even in blazing sunshine, Ailsa Craig is threatening because it's so close to civilisation.

The chamber at Torrylin is like a gun-sight pointing at Ailsa Craig. For analogous use of alignments see the gorsedd at Capel Garmon,^{G} North Wales.

NOTES AT GIANTS' GRAVES, WHITING BAY, ARRAN: 24TH AUGUST 1994 CE

[illegible]

The Giants' Graves

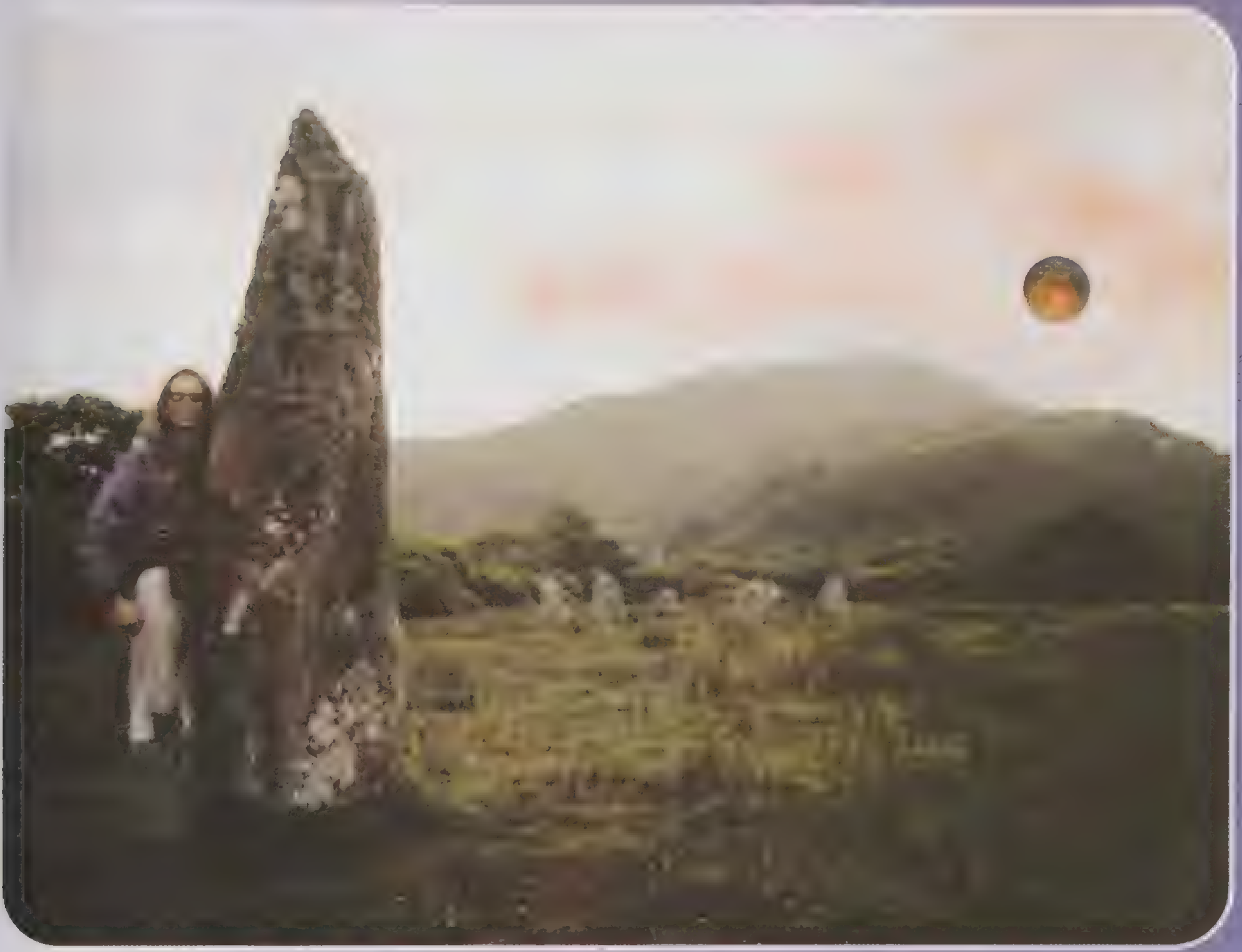
The Giants' Graves are signposted off the A841 around Whiting Bay. Torrylin is signposted off the A841 on the south coast close to Lagg and Kilmory. In some road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
49.618252

6 b) 9

Lochbuie Stone Circle

Standing in the wonderfully named 'Field of the Druids', a mysterious pasture within the grounds of a desolate and uninhabited country house, Lochbuie is the only stone circle for miles around, yet its condition is almost perfect. Nine large human-size stones stand in the lea of the towering sibling mountains Ben Buie and Creach Beinh, whilst four outliers of varying size grace the landscape hereabouts. The largest outlier, at nine-and-a-half feet tall, is also the closest stone to the circle, no more than fifty yards away. A large outlier over six feet tall stands in the middle of soggy cow pasture around 400 yards away to the north-north-west. Of all the circle stones, the tallest is over six feet tall, and all the stones of the circle are original except for one replacement standing at the north.



LOCHBUIE STONE CIRCLE AND STANDING STONE, NOTES IN SOME BUSHES IN THE RAIN, MULL: 20TH AUGUST 1994 CE

Oh, this is one of the most splendid places… We arrived in pouring rain which became fifteen minutes of bright sunshine. But by the time I had walked the 'pathway' and negotiated the streams, the sky was black and the rain was falling. Now, as I crouch in wet leaves, I think how this place was for a brief moment in the sun. Ha, the towering Ben Buie and its sister Creach Beinh menace the north side, whilst the whole horizon is that strange Mulloch phenomenon of jagged edges and bizarre massifs, creating a horseshoe horizon that cradles the monument and pushes the eyes to look south-westerly, out to the sea beyond the two tall outliers. The great stones of Lochbuie are lichen-grown and appear to be either graded or triangular. Their position is wonderful, being surrounded on two of four sides by deep overgrown vegetation and boggy marsh. So secluded is their place that only one stone has ever been overthrown; this now replaced by a small boulder to mark its place. Lochbuie is remote and obscure, but as undesolate a place I never have been.

Lochbuie requires patience and an O.S. map.

6 b) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
69.910324

Machrie Moor

The Isle of Arran is a dramatic and lonely place, with a west coast of unforgiving winds.

On Machrie Moor, a huge megalithic carnival was erected far out in the centre of a prominent area of the moor, in which examples of many different kinds of stone circles were erected within sight of each other. This suggests that Machrie Moor was a large ritual site, and of considerable importance.

The Four Poster.

Nowadays, the stone circles of Machrie Moor are all in varying stages of dilapidation. Many of the stone circles are made of boulders, and a tiny all-quartz four-stone ring has been discovered. But the most impressive remains are three huge sandstone pillars, each around eighteen feet high. This colossal monument was horribly attacked during the Industrial Revolution and a pair of stones remain where they were felled in an aborted attempt to turn them into millstones. To the south, on the main trackway, Fingal's Cauldron Seat is a bright low-slung eight-boulder stone circle of all-white quartz, surrounded by a further fifteen-stone ring of granite. In the centre is a ruined kist burial, from which it is possible to see all of the stone circles in the vicinity. Legend has it that the giant Fingal used to tie his hound, Bran, to the perforated stone whilst he was cooking in the centre. In 1861, the stones were excavated by J. Bryce, who uncovered an interior of small stones and a kist-like megalithic affair, but no finds of importance.

Fingal's Cauldron Seat.

Bryce was the excavator of most of this moor, indeed he turned his hand to many of the island's antiquities. Unfortunately, like most 19th-century antiquaries, Bryce had an overwhelming faith in himself. In order to sustain his own interest, he liked to dig as quickly as possible, and returned to Machrie Moor in September 1861, when he opened five sites in one day. Bryce's speed was of no help, though, and he only discovered a couple of kists, one food vessel, a bronze awl and some arrowheads in this rich place of high antiquity, leaving a trail of mess and chaos, plus scanty records of his swift pillage.

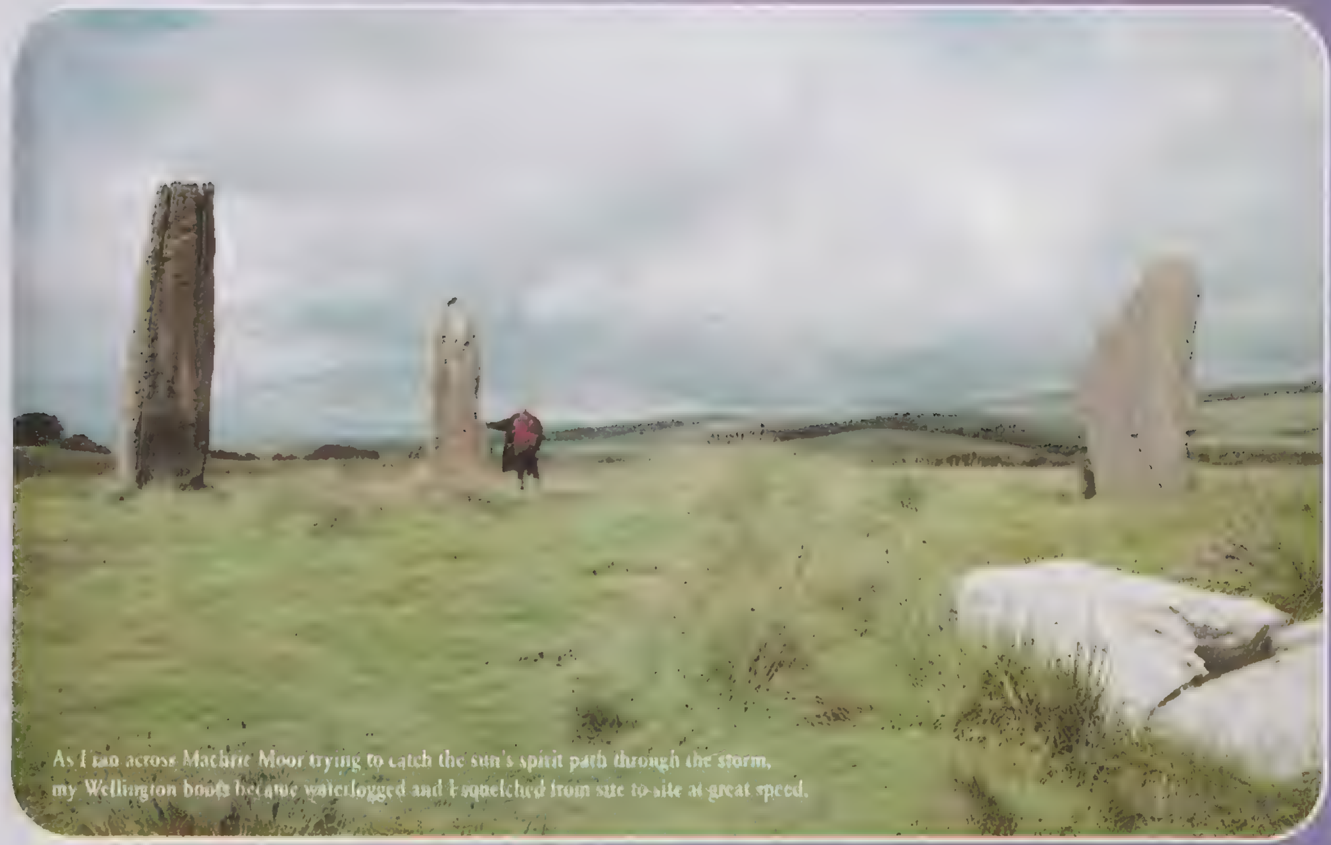
The great Machrie Moor standing stone, which rises to over thirteen feet, was formerly part of a stone circle comprising at least six stones. The weathering on the top of the stone is just like the feathering found at the Devil's Arrows, and it is difficult to take in the enormous size of this particular monument with all the other sites scattered around. Like the giants of Avebury,^{G} the sheer proliferation of stones on Machrie ensures that the modern mind is blown and unable to visit each site in a correct and satisfactory manner. Truly, if this stone circle were the only remaining monument on the moor, it would be far more legendary.

A Great Mother mountain to the east is created by Beinn Bhreac and Ard Bheinn, the latter being named after the Scandinavian Goddess Ard, or Urd, as in 'earth'. The feet of the figure are created by Cnoc Shievena (same root as the river Severn) from whence the sunrises would be formidable. The archaeologist John Barnett believes that four of the Machrie Moor circles were so placed in order to take advantage of a horizon notch. Barnett suggests that it 'explains why all six circles are located in only one restricted area of the three zones of high prominence on the moor'. The flash of sunrise through the notch could only have been a usable phenomenon from this one perspective.

NOTES ON MACHRIE MOOR, ARRAN: 24TH AUGUST 1994 CE

Stenness'^{G} brother-in-law was a stone circle on Machrie Moor. How the hell was this achieved? A combination of circles, some Stenness huge, others boulder small, litter this mythical moorland. The white boulders of Fingal's Cauldron Seat shine so hard in the sunlight that they seem invested with some opaque eternal light source. I ran from circle to circle [trying to photograph]... As the light came out from the clouds great curtains of darkness swept this deep moorland and veiled it, then all that was swept aside by a tidal wave of sunlight dazzling and assaulting, soon to be cast aside – no, kicked aside – by a bank of unbelievable blackness. And all the time I was running ... around the moor from circle to circle. People were sweet. They didn't get mad ... Now I'm shattered, mad and vibrating. The great sweeps of flare have stopped at last and the stillness of heavy cloud has restored order to this place. Whoa!

Machrie Moor is situated on the west coast of Arran, on the A841, signposted between Tormore and Torbeg.



As I ran across Machrie Moor trying to catch the sun's spirit path through the storm,
my Wellington boots became waterlogged and I squelched from site to site at great speed.

The benign expression on my face is one of sheer relief, for, as the shutter
snapped, the only ray of sunlight on the whole moor passed across my face.

6 b) 11

ORDNANCE SURVEY
49.907290

Strontoiller

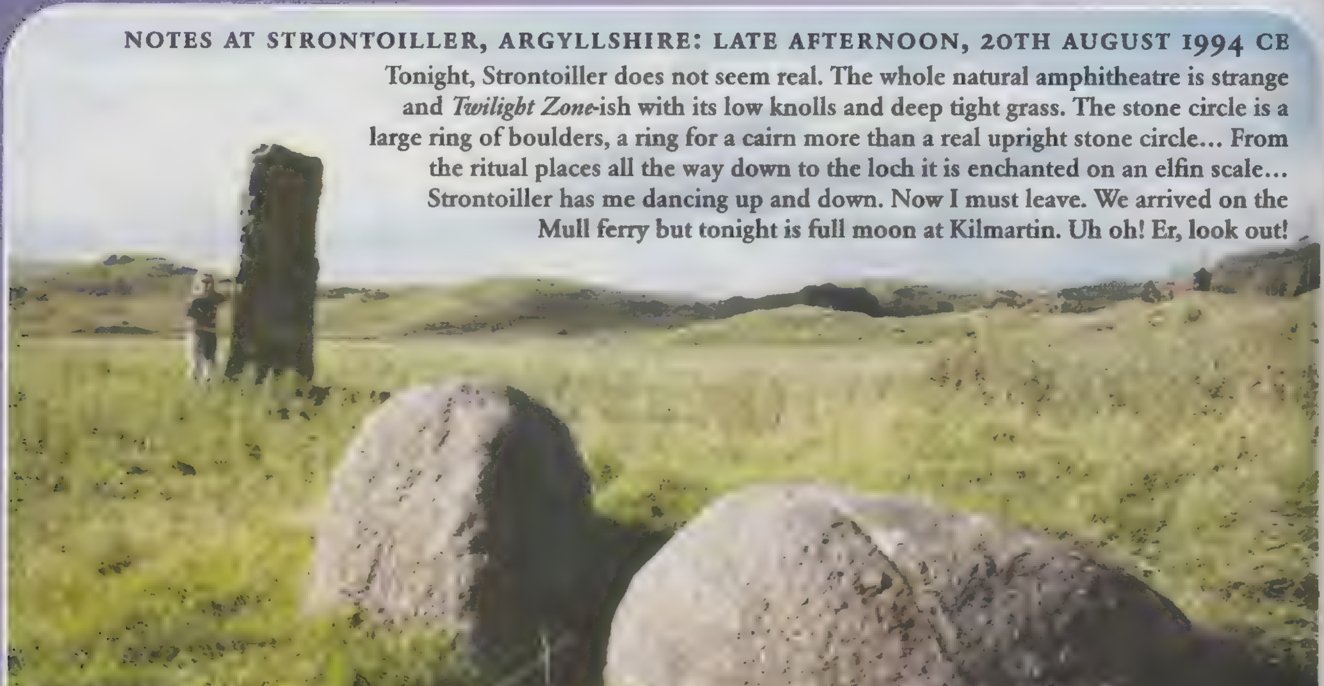
In Lorn, Argyllshire, at the mouth of Glen Lonan, just to the south of Strontoiller farmhouse, stands a small complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites. This area is a mass of fertile greenery at the northern head of Loch Nell and the site on which the monuments stand is surrounded by a low ring of hills, giving off the exclusive atmosphere of an enormous natural amphitheatre. Indeed, it as though nowhere else existed but this place. Clach na Carraig or Diarmid's Stone, the enormous standing stone beside the local road, is by far the most impressive of all the physical remains at Strontoiller. This hoary lichen-encrusted tower of granite has fistfuls of quartz hidden upon its face and stands over thirteen feet tall with an impressive girth of around three feet by four-and-a-half feet at its base. Diarmid's Stone's fabulous position and dominant size make it one of the most impressive single standing stones in Britain. Diarmid was an Irish hero and there is a small ring-cairn of heavy granite boulders just yards to the north of Clach na Carraig which, legend has it, was once the tomb of Diarmid himself. The cairn was probably opened some time in antiquity, but excavations in 1967 by Graham Ritchie revealed the possible remains of a funeral pyre and scatterings of cremated bone. The ground had been ritually prepared by clearing the scrub and scattering pebbles and chips of quartz before the heavy cairn boulders were then manhandled into place. Just to the near north of Diarmid's Stone is a low ring of stones, one of the very rare stone circles in the whole of this part of western Scotland. The circle is around twenty yards across and is made of thirty-one unimpressive boulders, none more than three feet in height. Aubrey Burl has suggested that this stone circle may have been related to the Clava circles[G] in Inverness-shire, but no central cairn or kist has been discovered thus far.

The crannogs of Loch Nell.

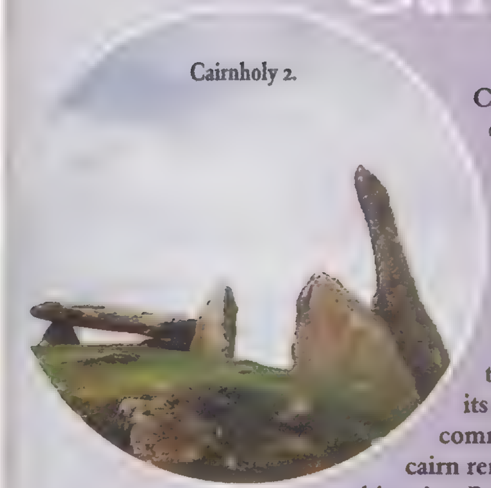
At Loch Nell the magical lakeside is reason enough for the visitor to stay all day, but the addition of two crannogs plus scattered remains of chambered cairns at the south end of the lake makes Loch Nell a must to visit. At O.S. 49. 87.26. is a pile of cairn material known as the Serpent's Mound, but this has not yet been visited, so no comment can as yet be made. The crannog and best place to view is at O.S. 49.883266.

NOTES AT STRONTOILLER, ARGYLLSHIRE: LATE AFTERNOON, 20TH AUGUST 1994 CE

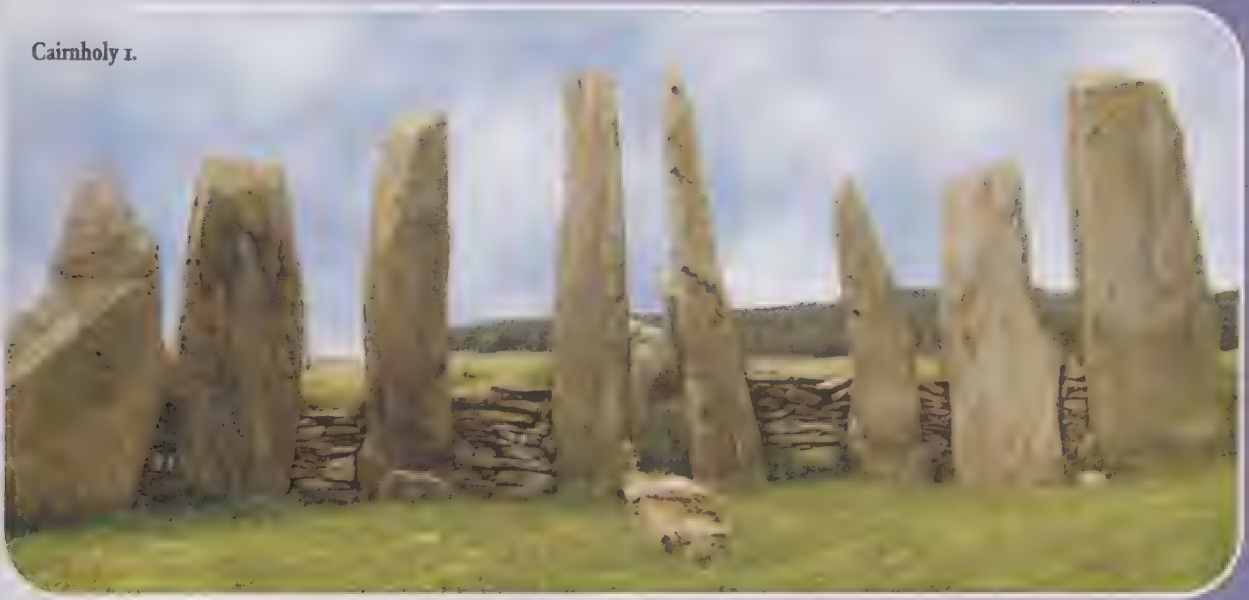
Tonight, Strontoiller does not seem real. The whole natural amphitheatre is strange and *Twilight Zone*-ish with its low knolls and deep tight grass. The stone circle is a large ring of boulders, a ring for a cairn more than a real upright stone circle... From the ritual places all the way down to the loch it is enchanted on an elfin scale... Strontoiller has me dancing up and down. Now I must leave. We arrived on the Mull ferry but tonight is full moon at Kilmartin. Uh oh! Er, look out!


Strontoiller requires an O.S. map.

Cairnholy 1 & 2


Cairnholy 2.

Cairnholy 1 & 2 are the remains of two large Clyde–Carlingford chambered cairns – trapezoidal cairns with a forecourt of upright stones. These two examples are situated around 150 yards apart overlooking the Kirkdale Burn, and in the lea of Cairnholy Hill, but their cairns are now just building material for the many walls and stone dykes in the area. The southern Cairnholy 1 is now the most visually impressive, with its megalithic forecourt of narrow upright slabs thrusting skywards and the small cairn still trailing out behind. It was almost 150 feet long and thirty-five wide when in its complete state, looking most like the remarkable Cashtel yn Ard.G Cairnholy 2 is a less physically impressive monument due to its greater destruction and the proximity of the farm and new tin barn. But it commands a more dominant position in the landscape and far more of its cairn remains. Legend has it that the mythical Scottish king Galdus was buried in this cairn. Both cairns were excavated by Stuart Piggott in 1949. He discovered that the megalithic entrance of Cairnholy 1 was a false one and a tall blocking stone prevented entry. The builders had cleverly allowed access only through the roof, adding the capstone only when the monument was complete. The excavators first had to clear away large amounts of earth and stone which had been used to fill up the monument at the time of its closure some time in the third millennium BCE. It has been suggested that Cainholy is a mutation of 'Carn Ulaidh', which means 'the treasure cairn'.


Cairnholy 1.

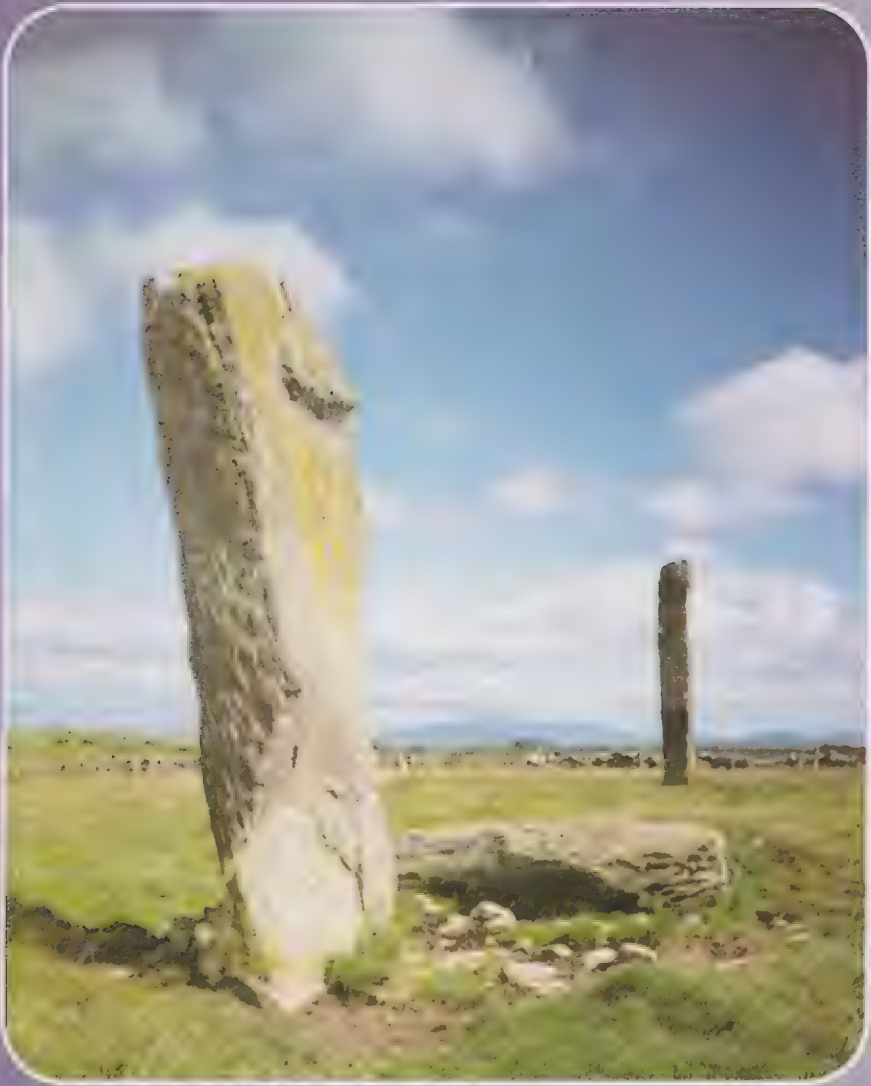
NOTES FROM CAIRNHOLY 1 & 2, LATE MORNING, 1ST AUGUST 1993 CE

Notes at Cairnholy 1: Wigtown Bay is beautiful, passive today and extraordinarily calm. We arrived in dull dampness and leave in warmth and dryness. This tomb is legendary, each stone shapely and extreme in its jagged form. Both tombs have entrances like shapely vulva, the chambers confined, and a return to the womb suggested at all turns. Between the tight lips of the entrance stones, a fallen blocking stone lies, the earth and vegetation now creeping up around it. The ruined mound streams out way behind it, one side still kerbed like Wayland's Smithy,G the other side turned into a tough drystone wall. We have talked of Cairnholy for so long. And now we are here … so mighty, so special; it is such a real high to be here. *From Cairnholy 2, sitting in bright sunlight with my back against the entrance stones*: The capstone is still in position here, the great forecourt not a feature of Cairnholy 2, but the upright entrance still huge and entrancing. Both tombs have a skeletal-dance in their now unmoving forms. They are brittle and easy-to-snap yet formidable in their age and extreme shapeliness. The main upright at Cairnholy 2 shrieks and yells at the sky, but there is no sound.

The Cairnholy monuments are signposted off the A75, between Gatehouse of Fleet and Creetown.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
83.36.44

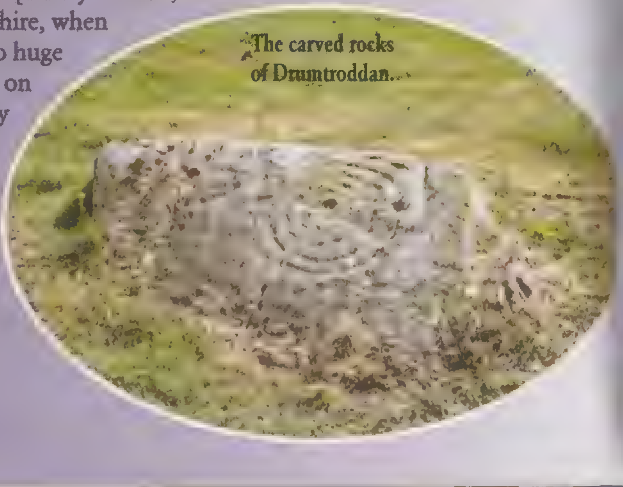
Drumtroddan Carved Rocks & Standing Stones



In the scattered farmlands of Drumtroddan, in the fertile area south of Wigtown, stand two great stones and a pair of rocky outcrops full of wonderful carvings. There are carved rocks all over this area, but many of them are almost impossible to find and a visit to Drumtroddan is the most worthwhile option. The carved outcrops are located about 300 yards behind the farm on the ledge of an elevated field. Both are protected by Historic Scotland's iron railings, which are an aid to locating the carvings, but care should be taken in crossing the field which has, on three separate occasions over the past six years, been full of dubious deep puddles which give off an intolerably sickly odour. There are many cup-marks here, as well as radially grooved carvings and concentric rings. Some of the carvings are actually linked by carved connecting channels. Less than 400 yards to the south, Drumtroddan's great three-stone alignment, of which the centre stone is now fallen, is reminiscent of the similar alignments found at Cork and Kerry in Ireland. These large and powerful stones, all over ten feet tall, are situated on a low ridge overlooking the White Loch of Myrton. They are often surrounded by a feisty herd of cows who use the stones as rubbing posts.

WEIRD NOTES AT DRUMTRODDAN AT DUSK, WIGTOWNSHIRE: 1ST AUGUST 1993 CE

The cows are back. And this is the most peculiar note I ever did write. [One year later, this cow experience would be far surpassed at Hawk Hill in Aberdeenshire, when the bullocks refused to let me visit the great Recumbent stone.] The two huge standing stones are surrounded by cows, all of whom almost stampeded on seeing me. They are very protective of their stones and I'm sitting twenty yards from them after first having visited those incredible carvings on the rocky outcrop close to Drumtroddan farm. This is certainly no place to hang out at, but such a necessary visit. The standing stones are huge and the smaller of the two massively narrow at the point where it enters the earth. This area is one of formidable beauty and those cows... Even now, they are looming over me as I sit on the ground, protected by a rickety wall...



The carved rocks of Drumtroddan...

Drumtroddan requires an O.S. map.

Girdle Stanes & Loupin Stanes

Pronounced 'Low-pin', to rhyme with 'cow'. In the mysterious valleys of the Esk, north of Lockerbie, there is an intriguing Neolithic complex made up of two stone circles linked by a natural knoll, which formerly had an avenue of small stones running across it. The Loupin Stanes are the first stones reached from the road. They are a bizarre circle of twelve graded stones standing on an artificial platform, the largest being the two bulky portals situated to the south-west. But despite their size, they are a very clear landmark overlooking the Esk. From here, it is thought that an avenue of small stones formerly passed south-south-west over the slight hillock to the older Girdle Stanes 600 yards away, staying mainly parallel with the river all the way. On top of this hillock, the eyes are sent staring north-easterly up to the distant hill of Watch Craig. If this name were an English back formation of some unidentifiable Gaelic name, which, knowing the cavalier attitude of the Empire English through my own hellishly confusing travel experiences, is highly likely, then Watch Craig is simply a mutation of 'Wer's mountain'. At the end of the missing 'stone avenue' stand the enigmatic Girdle Stanes – enigmatic because over a third of them are underwater. The changing course of the White Usk has eroded and toppled the stones, finally bisecting the circle and leaving great megaliths thrown down in the river's centre.

Girdle Stanes.

Loupin Stanes.

NOTES AT THE GIRDLE STANES ON MY KNEES BESIDE A RIVER, NEAR ESKDALEMUIR: 29TH AUGUST 1996 CE

Crouched beside this enchanted circle-henge, blissed out by the river running and the wind in the trees, I flip at just how perfect a *Modern Antiquarian* site this is. Entirely surrounded by very beautiful mountains, the Girdle Stanes are overgrown with extraordinary Fyfield Down-type miniature trees and wonderful two foot high pink thistles which, chivalrously, hug the outer bank but hardly encroach on the centre of the henge at all. Which is more that can be said about the river, which has chewed up much of the west bank and eroded nearly a quarter of the circle-henge. A sad former circle stone lies prostrate in the river, whilst the poetry of this place has me in mind of a Tolkien landscape in one of his 'safe' periods.

NOTES FROM THE KNOLL NEAR THE LOUPIN STANES

Well, this megalithic landscape is beautifully completed by this natural knoll which stands between the Loupin Stanes and the Girdle Stanes. I read about it when Aubrey Burl explained the possibility of an avenue between the Girdle Stanes and this knoll in his *The Stone Circle of the British Isles*. But now I'm intrigued and enchanted.

The B709 and the B723 meet at Eskdalemuir. From here, travel south on the B709 for about a mile. Pass Hart Manor Hotel on the left. The Loupin Stanes are now on your low right, overlooking the river. From this stone circle, walk a half mile south along the river to the Girdle Stanes.

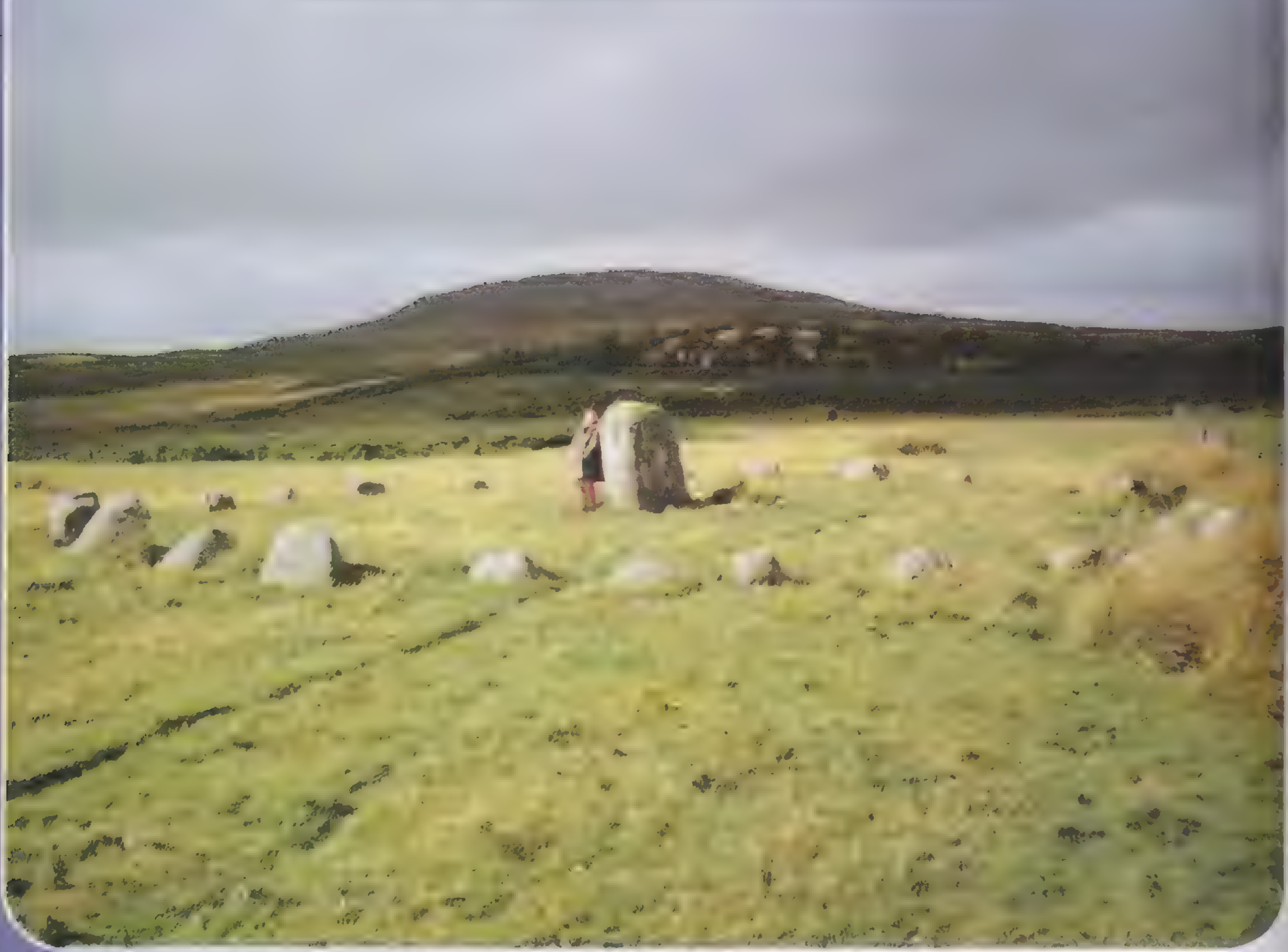
6 c) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
83.50958

Glenquickan

Standing in the lea of the sacred Knockeans Hill, on its own tightly cobbled pavement on level damp grassland, Glenquickan is a very special monument. Its position alone is peace-bringing. The large granite centre pillar is an incredible rubberoid bulge-ended phallus. It is surrounded by a circle of twenty-nine roughly spheroid kerbstone-sized boulders, with their broad faces placed along the line of the circumference, creating a majesty far exceeding the components. Two damp fields from the road, the area was formerly swarming with wondrous sites and Alexander Thom surveyed two nearby circles in 1939. To the south-south-east lies a similar but smaller circle in a more ruinous state and around the early 1800s, a kist was excavated, revealing the bones of a man 'of uncommon size'. Aubrey Burl has suggesed that the stone would reveal an 'ancestral' burial in the base, were it to be excavated.

Glenquickan adds a sensational glamour to my friend, the synthesist Thighpaulsandra.



NOTES IN BROWN CRAYON AT GLENQUICKAN STONES, WIGTOWN BAY: EARLY SEPTEMBER 1996 CE

I'm here! Two weeks ago I missed an opportunity before the Irvine Beach show and now I'm here! Glenquickan is a beauty – a stone setting only like the Portuguese monument of Reguengos [de Monserraz, a Neolithic square enclosure of similar-sized stones, with a taller but still phallic centre stone]. But with the magical Knockeans Hill as its mythical backdrop and the ring of surrounding hills, this circle needs very little else to make its own definition – this is a sacred site! Today in the mists, the wild Cambret Moor, with its cup- and ring-marks, and the eerie southern horizon towards Cairnholy Hill conspire to bring a glamorous union to the spot. Culcronchie Hill and Craig Hill, enshrouded in mist, hang heavy to the north and the ancient pathway which connects Cairnholy^{G} with Glenquickan sets my imagination a-firing on all cylinders!

Glenquickan requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
83.383564

6 c) 5

Torhousekie

On the fertile agricultural lands of Wigtown Bay, Torhousekie appears to be the great missing link, part of the psychic umbilical cord between the Recumbent stone circles of Aberdeenshire and their descendants on the southern tip of western Ireland. The stone circle stands on a sturdy raised circular terrace, nineteen graded granite boulders with a seventy feet by sixty-five feet diameter, ascending in sizes from the south-east at just two feet high to almost four-and-a-half feet at the north-west. At the centre is a strange stone setting which Aubrey Burl has asserted to be a degraded Recumbent stone & flankers in the Aberdeenshire tradition. This central stone setting places Torhousekie considerably later than either of the Irish or Grampian RSCs, which all had their great Recumbent stones placed at the south-west corners. It was only later that the Recumbent stones diminished in size and mutated into the centre of the circle. As this seems to be the case, the placing of a later decadent RSC in such a prominent position was more likely a symbolic gesture than proof of the migration of ideas, which are far more likely to have arrived in south-west Ireland along with the migration of several families simultaneously.

NOTES AT TORHOUSEKIE STONE CIRCLE, WIGTOWN: 1ST AUGUST 1993 CE, AROUND 5 P.M.

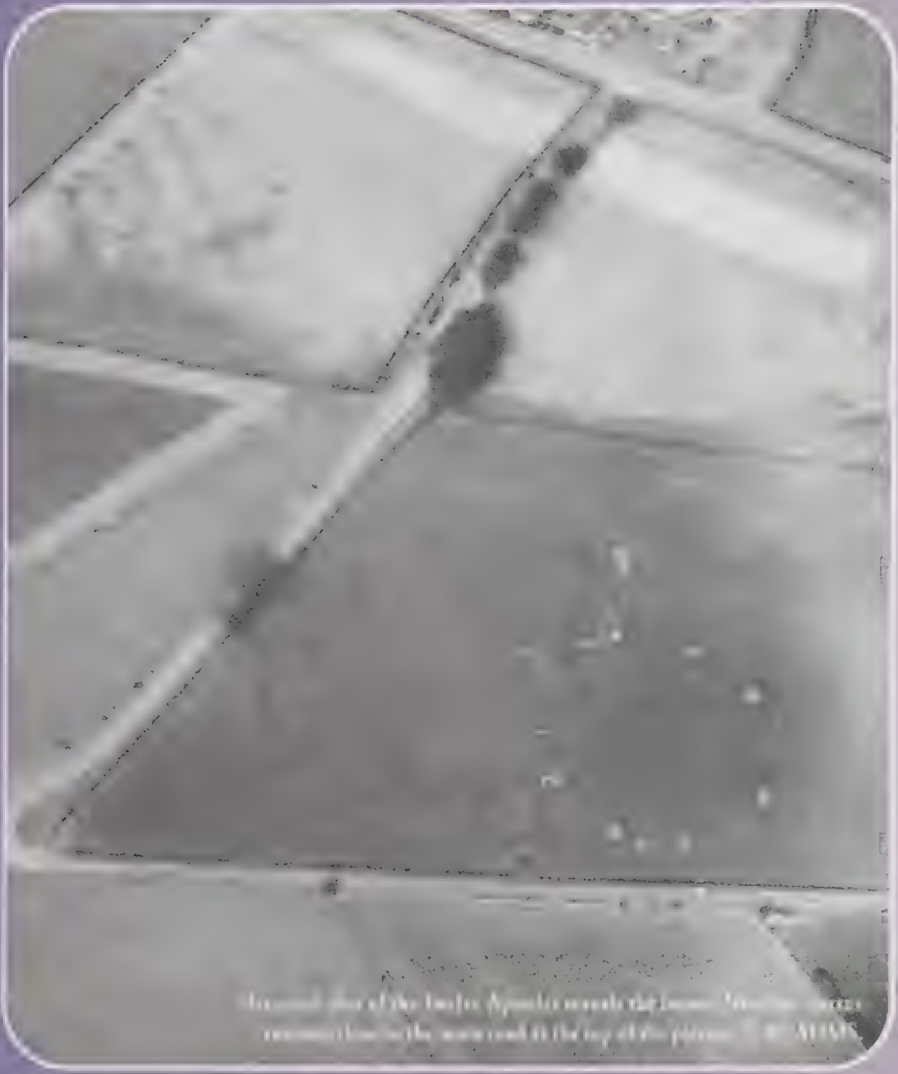
Torhousekie is incredible! Never have I seen so important a place historically fulfil such a spiritual and harmonious role as this place does. And effortlessly. Torhousekie is built in the middle of an undulating plain of beautifully green gentle hills. On all points of the horizon, near and far, the gentleness of the landscape is remarkable. It is only to the north-east that the distant and glowing massif of Cairnsmore of Fleet stands above, Ayers Rock-like and an obvious Mother hill. In the centre of this wonder, the stones of Torhousekie look neat and over-manicured. Surrounded by an overly careful wire fence and preeningly presented, it takes half an hour for the place to hit. For Torhousekie is the great missing link – the line that draws Cork and Aberdeenshire together… But Torhousekie is a beauty first and idiosyncrasy second. We have been here for hours today and have no desire to leave. I am here watching the sun roll slowly across the sky and that is enough.

Torhousekie stands beside the B733, about four miles west of Wigtown.

6 c) 6

ORDNANCE SURVEY
74.947794

The Twelve Apostles of Hollywood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Two-and-a-half miles north-west of Dumfries stands the largest stone circle in all of Scotland, and the seventh largest in the British Isles. This giant monument was originally an ovoid almost 100 yards across, and the stones were fifty feet apart. If only we had been around before the onset of heavy agricultural machinery. In 1837, only one of these great stones had been removed, but the past century's upheaval has seen stones moved around and huge amounts of white quartz ploughed up from the centre of the circle. Now only five of the remaining eleven stones are still erect. But the absent stones would have been huge, one bulky fallen stone being ten-and-a-half feet by seven-and-a-half feet. Only four of the circle stones were local, the rest being brought from Irongrey Hill two miles away. This landscape was clearly one of ritual importance, for there were, in the Neolithic, two long cursuses which passed close to the Twelve Apostles. In the late 20th century, the Twelve Apostles is a much battered site with many stones removed, and the remaining uprights seem somehow more ghostly because two fields are superimposed upon them. This circle stands in 360 degrees of beautiful horizons and hill-ranges.

SUNSET NOTES FROM THE TWELVE APOSTLES, NEAR DUMFRIES: 4TH SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

It's a beautiful evening. The sun has a clear path on its descent over the fabulous undulating hills that run to the WSW. Albany is playing and we're all at peace in various corners of this huge circle which hangs haphazardly over two fields. The Twelve Apostles is a Cumbrian-style circle, a huge open ring in the form of Gamelands^G or Long Meg.^G All the stones have suffered at some time but they are large enough to remain dignified in the recumbence. Bursts of quartz are in various stones and many of them have what appear to be deep cup-marks in quite dramatic forms, especially the chevron of cup-marks on the most south-easterly stone. But I think that it is most likely a bubbling in the formation of the lava that created this effect in the same way that many of Avebury's^G sarsens look cup-marked. The Twelve Apostles are in a remarkable area – flat pasture with no interruption from people and only the distant undulating hills to the west. This is a beautiful site and so unassuming considering its size.

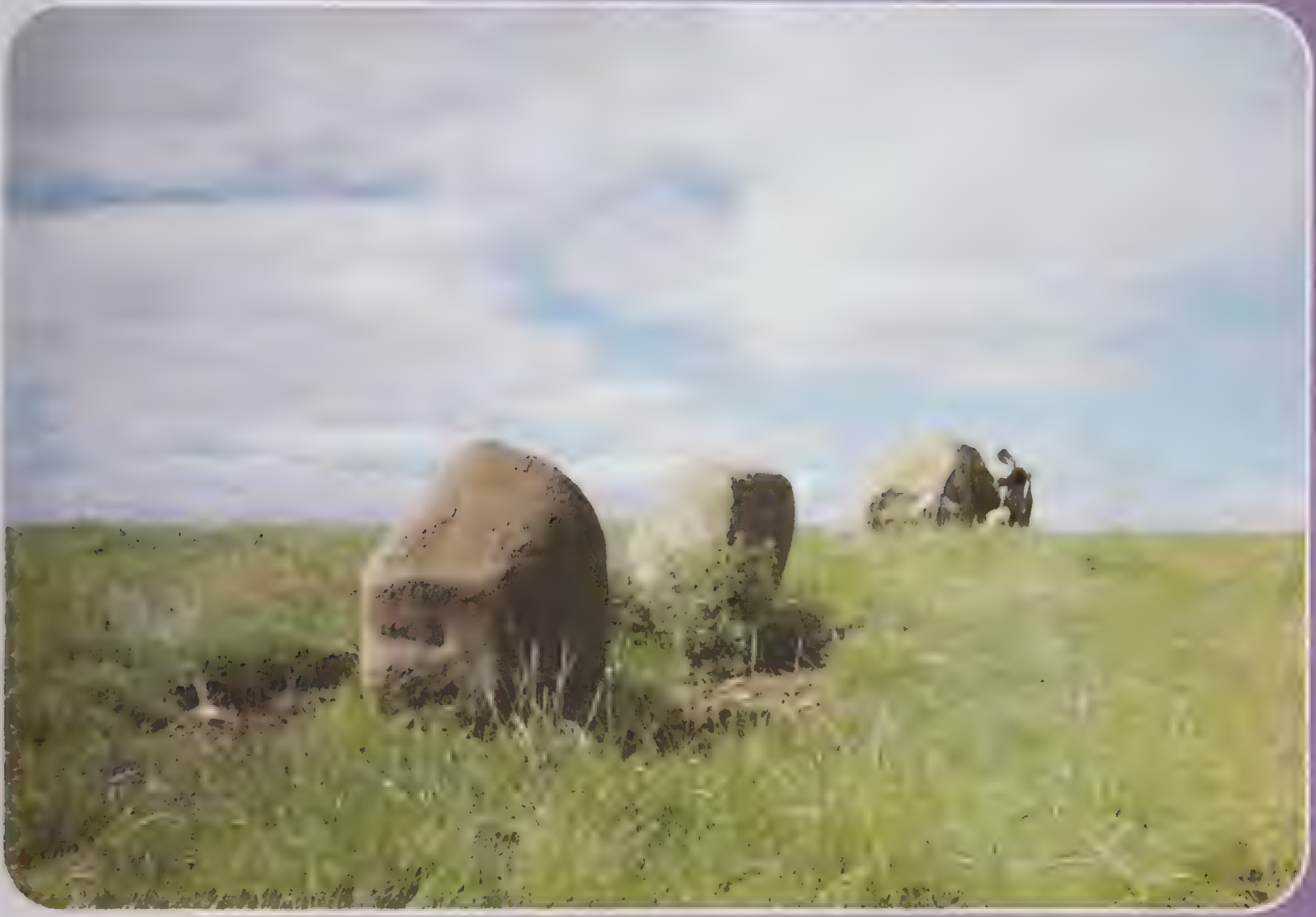
The Twelves Apostles are on most road atlases. You may still require an O.S. map, however, as the site stands at a curious junction of local roads and the A76.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
83.518539

6 c) 7

The Wren's Egg & Nest

Often confusedly interpreted as the remains of a huge circle around a large central boulder, the Wren's Egg & Nest is, in truth, a monument of far deeper significance. For it is a proto-Neolithic temple, designed to employ and enhance natural landscape features with minimal adjustment. The Nest is a naturally level platform, a huge natural tree-dotted mound of similar size to Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl,[G] with cairn material to the north of the mound closest to the stones. The Wren's Egg is a large round glacial erratic, with two small unremarkable standing stones around thirty yards to the west. In a field across the road is a very visible larger standing stone, with another encased in a field wall beside the local road somewhere in between. There is a small brook and drought-affected tarn to the east, from which the Ancients would have made their best ritual approach.



NOTES FROM THE WREN'S EGG, NEAR WIGTOWN: 30TH AUGUST 1996 CE

Here at the Wren's Egg, a combination of practices is in evidence. On a natural mound of trees stands a large glacial erratic, the Wren's Egg. About twenty yards from the main stone are two small squat standing stones whilst across the road to the south-west are two more small squat standing stones. The natural mound may have been added to and its tree-covered oval shape reminds me of Pitnacree or Bryn-yr-Hen-Bobl, even the area behind Poltalloch. At the stream is a standing stone and a mish-mash of interesting field cairn mess; could this be a significant place? The mound acts as a superb altar from which to conduct ceremonies, each natural element a likely Mesolithic jewel with only small Neolithic elements needing to be added to satisfy incoming agriculturists.

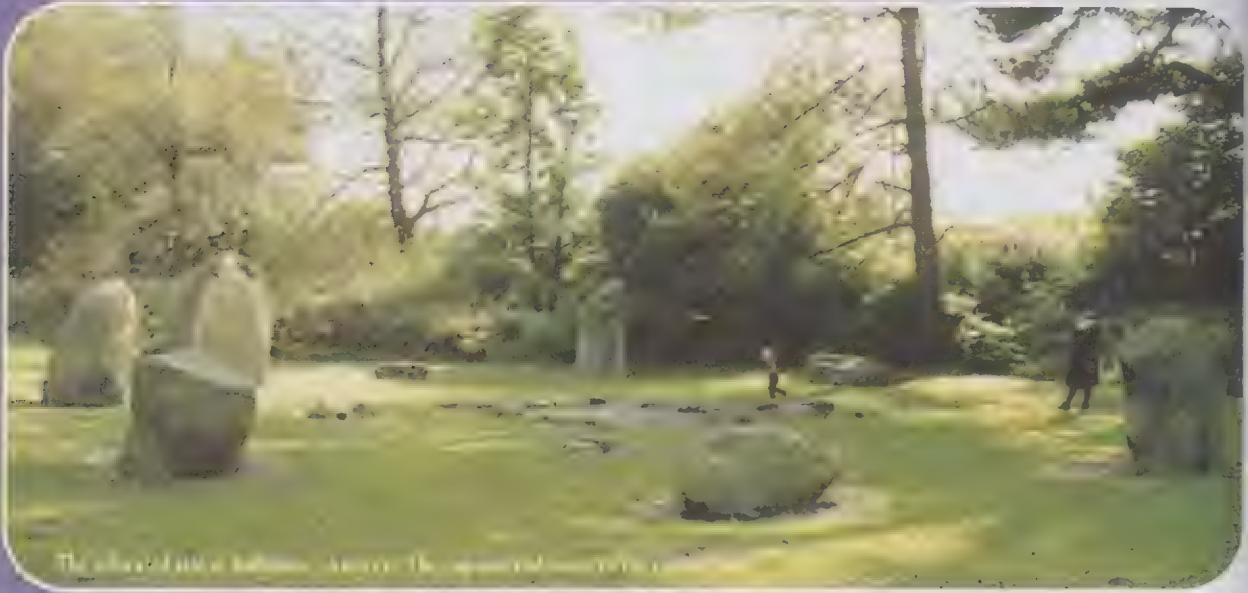
The Wren's Egg & Nest is in many road atlases. Otherwise, it will require an O.S. map.

6 d) 1

ORDNANCE SURVEY
59.(BIRNIE)285029/(FARG)281031

Balbirnie & Balfarg

This suburban area of new Glenrothes was once one of the oldest ceremonial centres in Britain, dating to before 4000 BCE. Extensive archaeological work from 1970 to 1985 was led by Graham Ritchie, who gradually dis-covered the site's importance. Balbirnie is a wonderfully placed stone circle in a tree-lined open park area called Balbirnie Park, unfortunately moved here unnecessarily in 1970, when road-widening threatened its existence. Balbirnie had three separate phases and was in use as late as 1100 BCE, the final phase being the megalithic slab-sided rectangle at the circle's centre, which was probably a mortuary enclosure. Four kists were inserted into the circle, one of which has seventeen cup-marks upon it. Aubrey Burl suggests that the later actions of the circle users were very similar to the actions of those involved in the depredations at the final phase of Berrybrae. At Balfarg riding school, huge timber postholes denote a series of large Neolithic enclosures, possibly used for the temporary platform burials used to let the bodies decompose before returning the bones to a cairn chamber somewhere. The henge of Balfarg is now ringed by a housing development built as late as 1977, but the earthwork itself was so ploughed out as to have been undetected, had it not been for the remaining two standing stones and the cropmarks revealed by aerial photography. Nowadays, the henge is deep and defined, though the houses ringing its perimeter detract a great deal. Balfarg's original stone circle is almost all gone except for the entrance to the henge, which was more than likely dug after the erection of the stones. Balfarg began as five huge timber circles, after replaced by two concentric stone circles, after which time the henge was most likely dug. The body of a young man was buried with a flint knife and a large beaker around 1900 BCE in the flat centre of the henge.



SUBURBAN HENGE NOTES AT BALFARG: 29TH AUGUST 1993 CE

Balfarg sits fairly easily in the 1990s' sun, the houses, only three years old (sic), are fairly easy to take what with the reconstructed timbers and the depredations done to the stone circle… I could not sit in this goldfish bowl very long – children have been lured out by our presence this Sunday afternoon and also a couple of older people with news and information additional to the standard archaeological guff.

FAERIE RING NOTES FROM BALBIRNIE STONE CIRCLE: 29TH AUGUST 1993 CE

This is a faerie ring in a beautiful setting. The pilgrimage is retained; it's a good walk from the car and the approach is beautiful (except for the placing of the notice boards, which are ten feet from the greatest stone)… The replaced kists have great charm… Now, Albany is singing loud and clear and playing around the kist. No one is around and this day is perfect.

These sites both require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
65.987717

6 d) 2

Cairnpapple

Since around 3000 BCE, the hilltop of Cairnpapple, or Kernepopple as it was until the seventeenth century, has been a marvellous ritual centre, enduring many different phases of reconstruction and sometimes pure destruction in the Ancients' quest for reconciliation with the heavens and earth. The significance of the hill is obvious, for, it is said, on a clear day the visitor can see all the way west to the Arran mountains in the Firth of Clyde, all the way east to the Bass Rock in the North Sea, as far as the Ochill Hills to the north, and the border hills of Pentland and Moorfoot to the south. The monument's first phase was an arc of standing stones semi-circling three large boulders, which have been interpreted as a cove by some archaeologists. The stone holes of the arc were all filled with ritual deposits of cremated human bone, and this, combined with the possible cove, links Cairnpapple with the earliest phase of Avebury.[G] The remains of broken stone hand-axes from Penmaenmawr in North Wales and from Langdale in Cumbria suggests major traffic between the sites. In the second phase, Cairnpapple was refashioned as a double-entranced henge, with twenty-four standing stones in a large oval, and two graves were found within this phase. Finally, a large cairn was heaped onto the henge and much of the stone oval was destroyed in order to provide cairn material. This cairn covered Bronze Age burials, on top of which a final and much larger cairn was heaped. Cainpapple was clearly of extraordinary significance, as the final graves dug within the ditch area were very likely of the Iron Age. The strange mix which the current Cairnpapple reveals is the excavators' attempt to show the main phases of Cairnpapple simultaneously.

Beneath the concrete dome, the burial kist has been carefully reconstructed.

CAIRNPAPPLE IN AUTO-GEDDON, NOTES FROM THE DITCH IN CLEAR BLUE HEAT: 26TH AUGUST 1993 CE

Cairnpapple Hill is one Mother mountain. On all sides she is flanked by the great clear horizon. The landscape god is recumbent at her west, a fair groom for Sleeping Beauty at Callanish.[G] Six folded mounds or hills lie below him to the right and massifs of dark brooding shoot out at random points through the near and far horizon. For Cairnpapple Hill, being the tallest and most sacred and special hill in the district, has certain negative aspects. For it is here that the greed-heads they call Mercury Communications have chosen to put a trio of wire monsters into the ground – aerials of awesome ugliness that could have served on two other hills in the area. Instead, Cairnpapple Hill has got them. Yet, this incredible monument is unbeatable. A henge. The highest henge I ever did attend… We've been here for over three hours and have no reason to leave.

Cairnpapple Hill is visible north of Bathgate, because it has an enormous communications aerial next to it. Follow this vile antenna until you see signs for Cairnpapple.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
52.797473

Croft Moraig

Overlooking the confluence of the rivers Tay and Lyon, Croft Moraig is a huge six-stone ring with additions that give it the most wonderful atmosphere of former-order-now-mistunderstood. Mythologically, this is the classic circle of the area, the one everyone sees in its elevated position overlooking the main Aberfeldy–Kenmore road and the flag-waver for all other Perthshire sites. Indeed, in 1910 the archaeologist Fred Coles wrote 'the most unobservant pedestrian or rider – always excepting the begoggled motorist – cannot but see the green mound bristling with great grey stones'. Croft Moraig is a mess of large mid-grey boulder stones with a very complex history. It began as a large horseshoe pattern of heavy timber posts, around 3000 BCE according to current dating, open at the south-west end with a very narrow eastern timber entrance only three feet across. A boulder lay at the centre with a possible dedicatory offering of burnt bone close by. Eventually, at some time unknown, the timber was replaced by stones and a six foot long heavily cup-marked stone, which Aubrey Burl claims as a marker of the southern moonset. This recumbent cup-marked stone links with the RSCs of Aberdeenshire and also the strange Linne Loiny mini-henge (see Fortingall).^{G} Burl comments: 'Another cupmarked stone at the north-east of the horseshoe stood close to where the midsummer sun would rise above the mountains.'

The final phase of the monument involved the erection of twelve large stones which encircled the entire horseshoe and all its previous phases.

CROFT MORAIG NOTES IN RAIN FROM UNDER A TREE: 18TH AUGUST 1994 CE

The righteous tumble of big stones is beautifully damp and atmospheric today. I'm crouched under a large leafy deciduous with sheep munching on my right. Croft Moraig has an important levelled and embanked platform and the jumble of the very large stones and the smaller south-south-westerly horseshoe setting make for a vital and intriguing monument. Yesterday, we took photographs in fine ultra-warm weather, yet I prefer the dampness of today and we have been wasting time just standing around taking in the loveliness of this stone circle. Croft Moraig is close to the road, but it is easy to miss the stones, as few drivers can look anywhere but at the road. And the road's proximity is no more annoying than the presence of the farm and farmhouse. This is a fabulous stone circle.

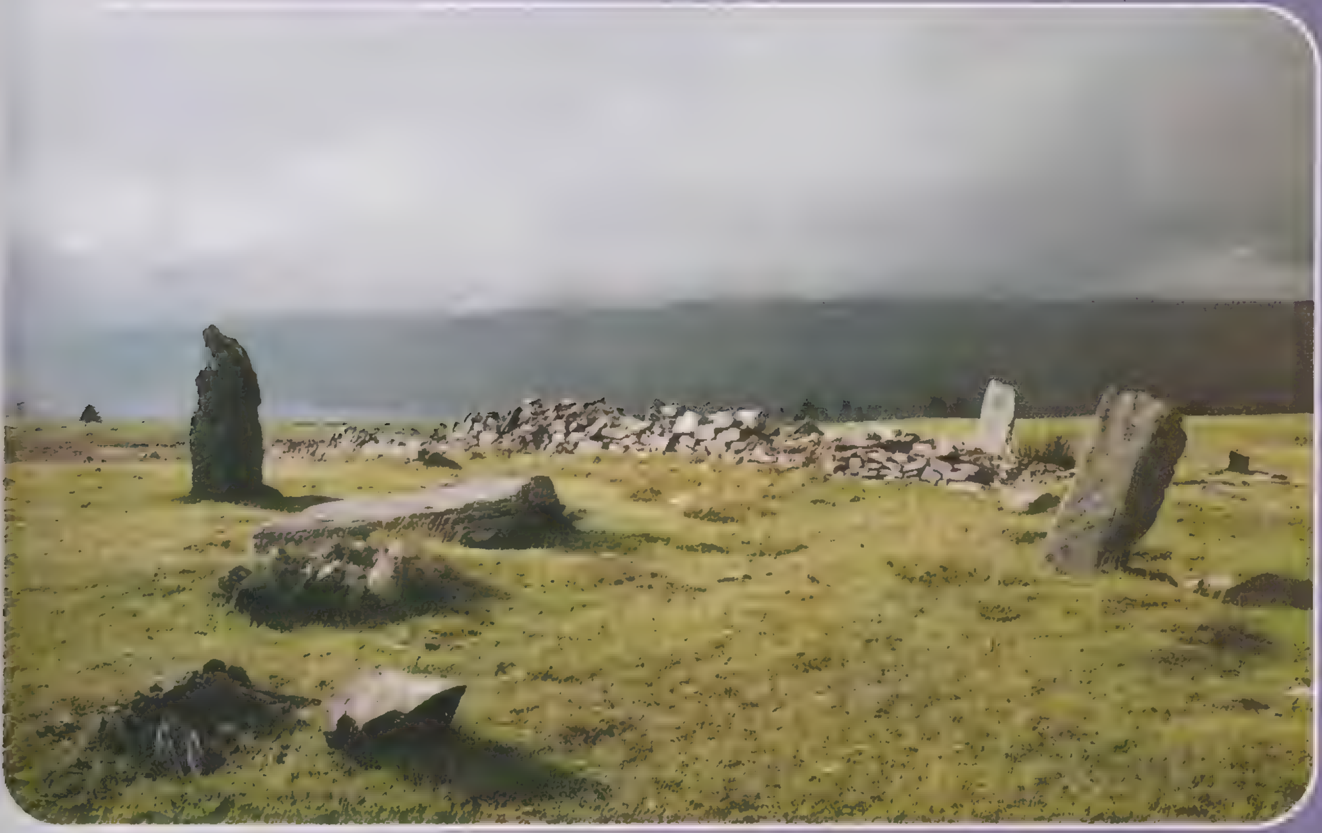
Croft Moraig stands on the A827, about two-and-a-half miles north-east of Kenmore. This area is very tree-lined and the stones are in a farm on the right, on a raised shelf. In many road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
52.767425

6 d) 4

Falls of Acharn Stone Circle

Acharn stone circle stands righteously on the slopes of Greenland farm, built with such breathtaking views over Loch Tay that, on the day of my visit, the clouds were lower than the stones and came in sweeping right through my clothes. The climb up to the circle is long and arduous and the graded stones are very ruined, yet enough remain to evoke a deep sense of forever in the visitor. The nine stones are now so battered that only four remain standing, whilst two lie prostrate and the others are long gone – probably built into the field wall which bisects this stone circle right along the ridge of the summit. The stones originally stood at between two feet and seven feet in length. The Falls of Acharn were excavated in 1924, at which time the centre of the circle revealed deposits of dark earth, calcinated bones and charcoal. It is worth noting that Aristophanes' earliest surviving play is an anti-war comment called *The Acharnians*. Acharn appears to be an archaic word for 'cairn' or the Keltic *carn*. The obvious etymosophical root here is 'O'Koeur', and this whole mountainside and the spectacular waterfall below appear to have been dedicated to that hill Goddess.



BREATHTAKING NOTES IN RAIN AT THE FALLS OF ACHARN STONE CIRCLE, OVERLOOKING LOCH TAY: 18TH AUGUST 1994 CE

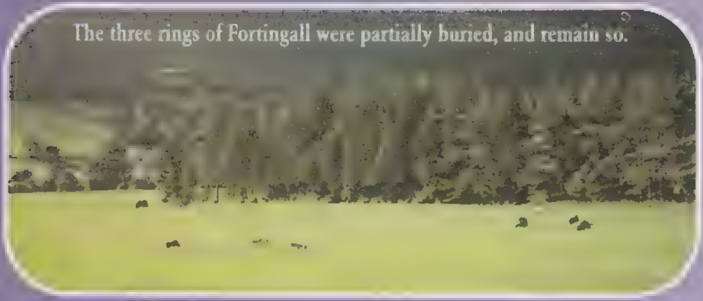
Up here at the highest circle, I'm beginning to grasp the affinity with infinity that the Ancients had. Up here, there is no time but the rolling of the clouds and the waters infinite, feet below me. And this is the greatest position of all for a stone circle, ready as a candle hillmaker, a maker of bonfires when the guests or the new people arrive. All along the loch, natural outcrops of rock have been cup-marked, stations of the sacred – and the most special places of all were the stone circles. Now the rain is sweeping up the loch and I will have to run for cover. *Continued later at Donally House*: Whoa! I wrote those notes ... and dashed back to the car. Then, as I wrote, the heavens opened and the south-eastern sky started doing mad colour games, then the sun came out and the whole south-westerly sky turned blue. I frantically snapped my instamatic [and] a beautiful rainbow appeared to the north-east in front of Creag an Fhudair.

The Falls of Acharn require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
51/52.SEE BELOW

Fortingall & Kenmore

The legendary birthplace and home of Pontius Pilate, Fortingall is a flat hidden verdant backwater behind the northern head of Loch Tay. Three circles lie in open fallow land and a permanently wet pasture. Antiquaries used to consider Fortingall west to be a four-poster, though the stones are so battered as to be unjudgeable. Fortingall east circle has a sad air to it, whilst the western stones are part of a much larger monument, built of chunkier stones. The Linne Loiny complex is a subtle and almost lost ritual area standing on the same central river plain as the Fortingall monuments, beyond a small woodland area. The Appin of Dull stands in deep vegetation in a field near Carse, surrounded by tumuli. Aligned on Drummond's Hill, one graded triangular stone is covered in cup-marks. Machuim is an imposing six-stone ring on a small but hardily-constructed mound. The stone circle stands just 200 yards uphill from the main road on an imposing south-westerly shelf overlooking Loch Tay. Its steep position gives breathtaking views. Kenmore church occupies the prime position at the centre of Loch Tay's east end, standing on a moundlike ridge. The church probably Christianised a former sister monument of the Killin circle[G] at the other end of Loch Tay.

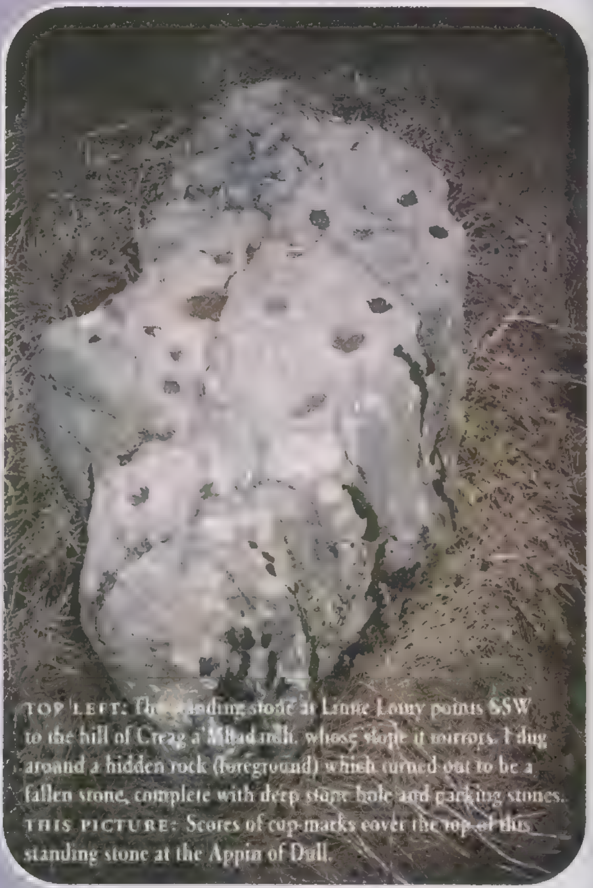


The three rings of Fortingall were partially buried, and remain so.

FORTINGALL NOTES FROM A WALL, GLEN LYON: 9.00 A.M.-ISH 19TH AUGUST 1994 CE

The peace in this valley is overwhelming. The river's constant rush and the long grass pushed by the wind are only ever disturbed by the occasional local car making its way through the flat plain of Glen Lyon. The sky on two of three sides is ominous and rain-bearing, but the south-east side of the sky has cleared an elegant path for the sun's passage and it is beaming down huge shafts of light as I write…

At Linne Loiny, there is a strange mini-henge and Recumbent.



TOP LEFT: The standing stone at Linne Loiny points SSW to the hill of Creag a' Mhadaidh, whose slope it mirrors. I dug around a hidden rock (foreground) which turned out to be a fallen stone, complete with deep stone hole and packing stones. THIS PICTURE: Scores of cup-marks cover the top of this standing stone at the Appin of Dull.

THE APPIN OF DULL: 52.802487
FORTINGALL: 52.745469
KENMORE CHURCH: 53.772455
LINNE LOINY: 52.732465
MACHUIM: 53.682402

Kenmore church is in the village at the head of Loch Tay. The other sites require an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
65.123726

6 d) 6

Hully Hill Monument

Abominably situated on the main road out of Edinburgh on a permanently 'improved' roundabout, behind a petrol station and a housing estate, stands the bizarre Hully Hill monument. Despite its ill-fortune, this Bronze Age site has nevertheless survived and it is a very unusual configuration. One large low mound stands around thirty yards across and over ten feet tall and is now supported by a modern retaining wall. This great heap stands with three great stones at each major station, dividing the barrow circle like a Legs of Man or a St. Bridgit's Cross. It is impossible to know whether or not this was once a full stone circle, but the three rough untooled stones are all of impressive size, two being around seven feet in height and the third, at five feet, appearing to have had its top broken off. A '60s style pavement and suburban manicure rests uncomfortably with the Paganism of all this. Standing to the east about 600 yards away is the huge Lochend Longstone, a powerful and tall menhir about ten feet tall now situated in a corporate garden. The archaeo-astronomer Doogie Scott has noted that an observer standing at the Hully Hill monument would have seen the stone align on Arthur's Seat, the great natural outcrop in Edinburgh.

OVAL INSET: The Hully Hill outlier is now hemmed in by its showroom neighbour.

NOTES AT THE HULLY HILL MONUMENT, NEAR EDINBURGH: AFTERNOON, 27TH AUGUST 1993 CE

I'm sitting on top of a Bronze Age mound about ten feet tall, surrounded by three standing stones, four, six and seven feet tall. Behind me, pointing towards Castle Rock, is an outlier about eight feet tall. All this is great except for the main roads that converge at the traffic island, all of which bisect the monument and make people think that they aren't interlinked. But suburban/industrialised as the site is, it's a bizarre and inspiring anomaly. To see standing stones and tumuli in this environment is a rare experience and how glad I am that this has all survived.

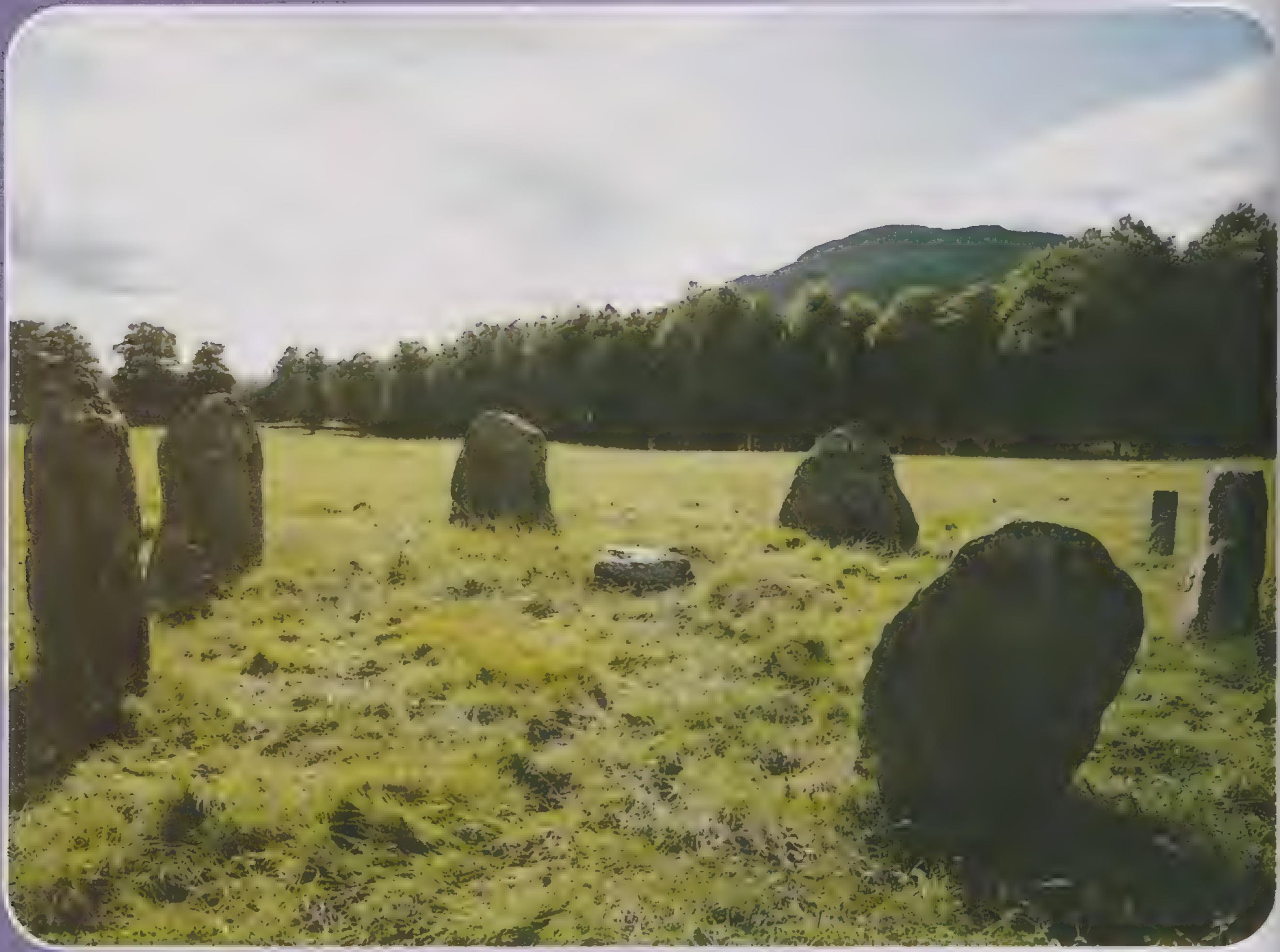
Hully Hill monument stands on Junction 2 of the M8. Take the A899 west and pull immediately into the petrol station. Drive through the back onto the local road, turn left and park. Reorientate yourself by walking towards the roundabout – the monument is here.

6 d) 7

ORDNANCE SURVEY
51.577327

Kinnell of Killin

The best stone circle in Perthshire stands in private grounds near the river at the head of Loch Tay. These stones of a dark grey schist are large for a six-stoner, with heights ranging from four to six-and-a-half feet. This gives a rare and dynamic presence to their manicured pasture. They stand in a flat verdant field suuurounded by quartz-laden field walls. These large stones are visible from an incredibly windy driveway, about one-and-a-half miles in length, in the shadow of two magic hills. Permission to see the stones comes from a lovely woman at the main house who is delighted that you are here to visit. If she had a tea-garden, she would make a fortune.



KINNELL (IT'S A STONE CIRCLE) – NOTES FROM KILLIN ON A BEAUTIFUL 17TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This is the greatest circle I've yet seen around the Tay. But of course, for Kinnell stands at the very beginning of Loch Tay at the far east end of the river Dochart. And here arrived the Ancients travelling from Ireland and up to Aberdeenshire. The great stones of Killin were erected in pride of place, in honour of those who were to arrive soon, placed by those who came first. Where the road-bridge crosses the Dochart, beautiful tumbling waters rush over fabulous treacherous rocks, the final terrifying moments before the stupendous calm of Loch Tay. Circles dot the edges of Loch Tay, crannogs skirt the water's edge, man-made islands as landing points. And beyond all is this great circle set in the grounds of the Kinnell estate. To the west, the magnificent mountain of Gron a Clachan towers over the circle and the river, whilst to the south the even greater Beinn Leabhainn growls forebodingly. The top of the most southerly stone at Kinnell echoes the pinnacle of this black mountain, perhaps using similar style as the Aberdeen architects employed at Balquhain,[G] Old Keig[G] and Hatton of Ardoyne. Indeed, it is the size and personality of the ring which are so impressive, but beyond all that, it is perfectly removed from everyday life. We have now been here for ages in this enormous quiet pasture and Kinnell is a true beauty.

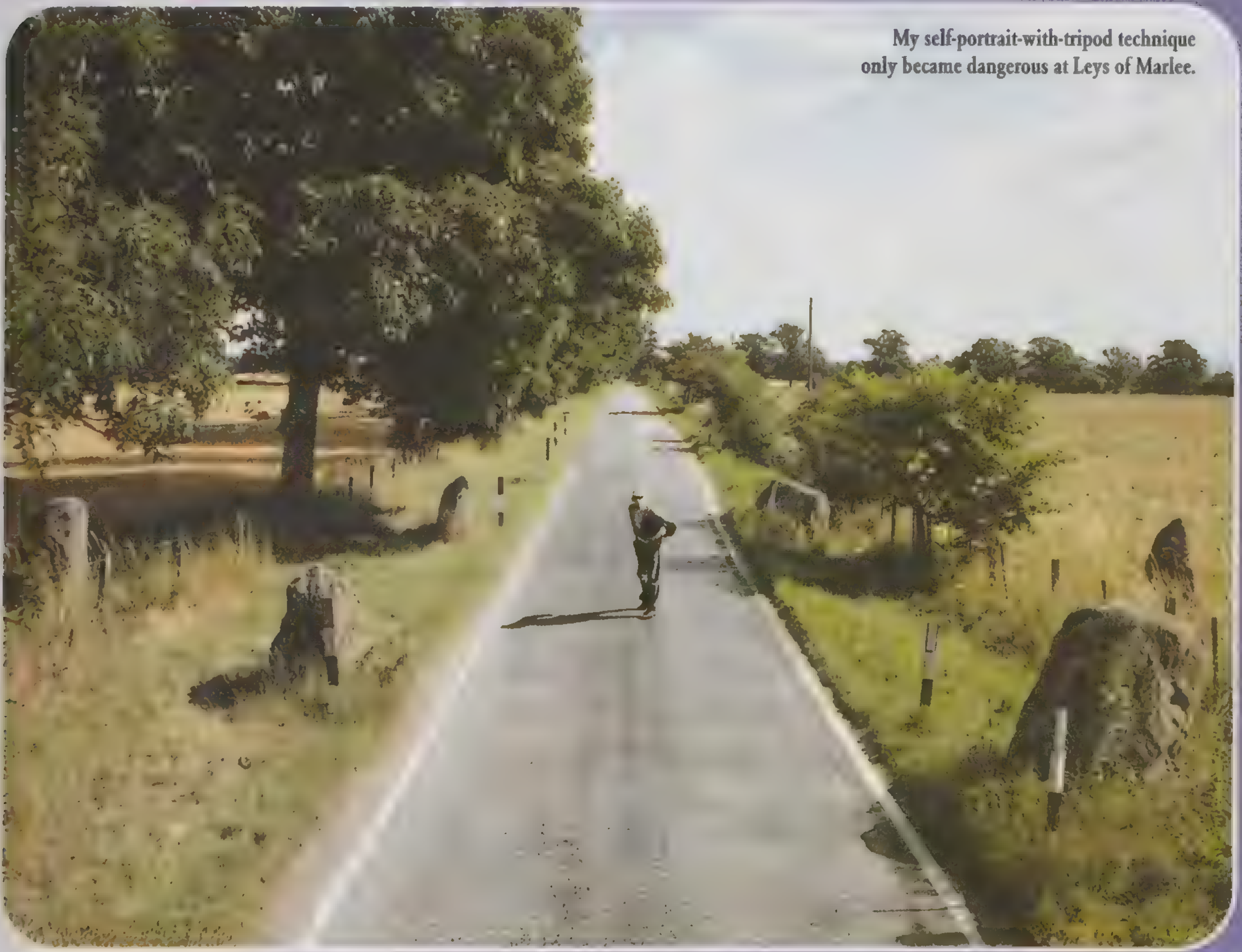
Kinnell of Killin requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
53.160438

6 d) 8

Leys of Marlee

I wished to rename this place Slow Stone circle on account of the road signs and the fact that it's a fabulous big six-stoner with a B-road running through it. The B947 was laid right through the circle in 1856, though there was most likely a trackway from the circle to the river bridge before this time. Now, traffic to and from Blairgowrie passes through the site at about sixty miles per hour. The six stones are large and graded to the south-west where the largest stone of the circle stands six feet tall. Two stones were moved to facilitate the widening of the road, but Leys of Marlee remains a wild stone circle and an essential visit. When I visited the stones, I was dropped off in the middle of the circle, a feat only achievable at Long Meg,^G Avebury^G and Carinish on North Uist.^G But only here is the circle so placed on its ancient trackway that drivers can pass it unnoticed. Yet the real pilgrims may still lose their sense of past, present & future.



My self-portrait-with-tripod technique only became dangerous at Leys of Marlee.

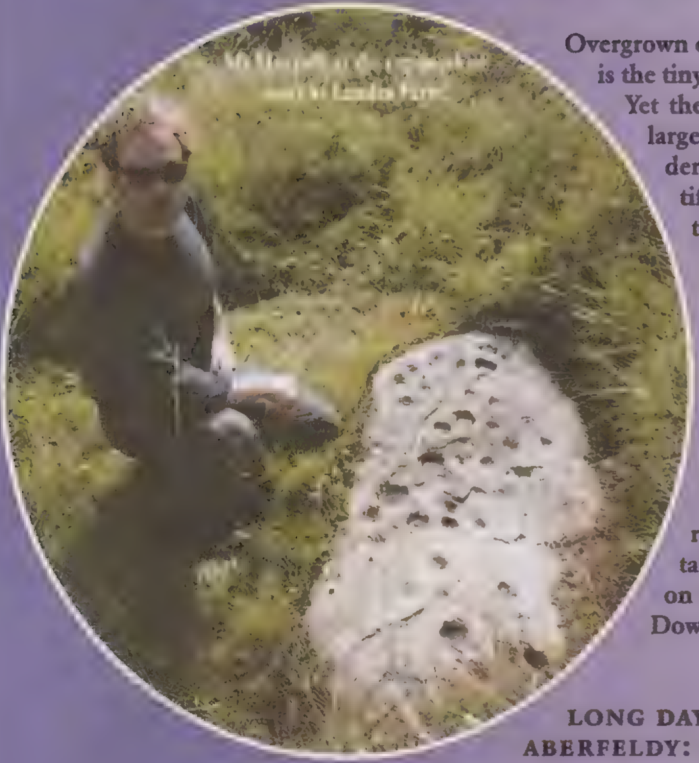
MIDDLE OF THE ROAD – NOTES ON THE RUN AT LEYS OF MARLEE STONE CIRCLE, NEAR BLAIRGOWRIE, PERTHSHIRE: 17TH AUGUST 1994 CE

There's a 'road narrows' sign in a triangle and four 'slow' signs painted on the road, announcing the classic six-stoner here at Leys of Marlee. And here with my left foot in the road and blistering heat and sunlight overhead, I sit in awe and true disbelief. For it is here that ancient magic meets modern high communal magic. Cars and a removal van have already passed within twelve inches of my foot, yet we think nothing of the drivers' accuracy at fifty m.p.h. in not swerving and accidentally reducing me to a uniped. I wanted to call this place Slow Stone circle, as it has no known legend, but Alexander Thom surveyed it as Leys of Marlee, and that is much more dignified. The sky is blue, blue with real ocean galleons of cloud passing over. The stones are large boulders of quartzed perfection, darkened and lichened and surrounded by lush agriculture…

From Muirton of Ardblair, travel north on the A93 towards Blargowrie. Take the first left onto the B947 and travel approximately a mile. Stones will suddenly encircle you.

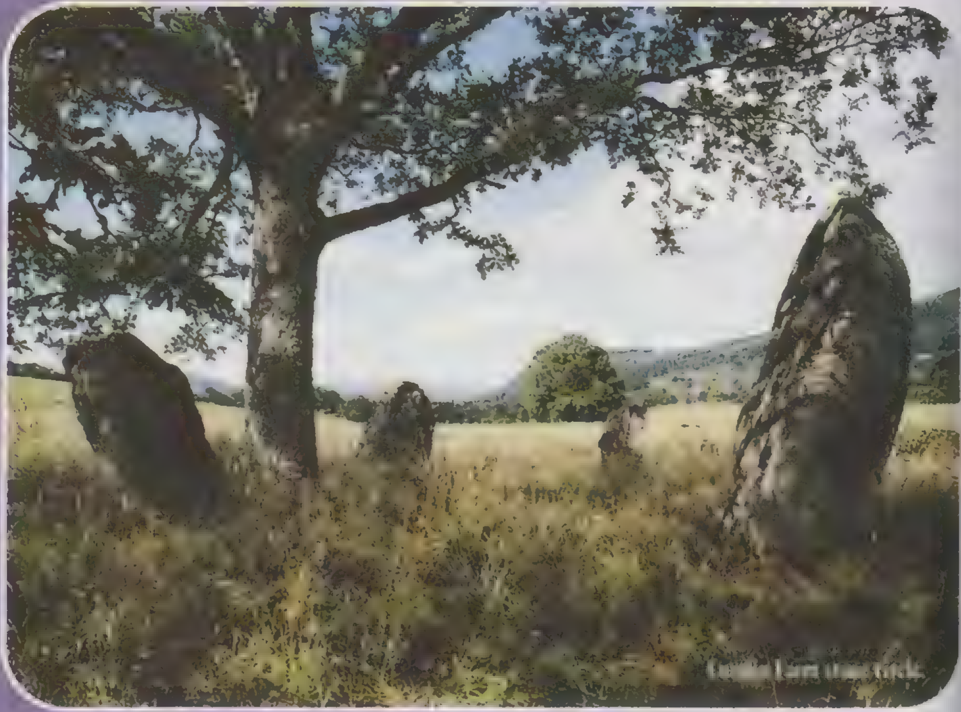
ORDNANCE SURVEY
52.882506

Lundin Farm & Pitnacree


[illegible] at the cup-marked stone at Lundin Farm

Overgrown on its farm trackway, the bizarreness of this large four-poster is the tiny ground area which it fills – only thirteen feet by eleven feet. Yet the stones of quartziferous schist are impressive in size, the largest standing over seven feet tall, and the monument is wonderfully removed from the world. There is a semi-buried beautifully heavily cup-marked stone and I returned to film under the moon. The mound on which this four-poster stands is natural, made of moraine gravel. A 1962 excavation revealed that this natural hillock had been deturfed and had a V-shaped ditch dug around it. Shards and bone, along with organic materials, were deposited in a scooped hollow at the centre. The four stones were then erected on either side of this dedicatory rite. The legendary Neolithic mound of Pitnacree is close by. It is still fairly large by the side of the road, overgrown by huge trees, but much reduced from its former grand size by farmers ploughing on regardless. There is a small standing stone about three feet tall in the centre of the mound like the unusual tooled stone on the Bronze Age barrow near Fox Covert, just south of Knoll Down outside Avebury.^{G} Pitnacree is found at O.S. 52.928534.

LONG DAY'S DRIVE – NOTES AT LUNDIN FARM, ABERFELDY: 15TH AUGUST 1994 CE


Lundin Farm stone circle.

Peace at last! As the cows low and the final lambs call to their mamas, the sunset over the vast mountain of Schiehallion and its smaller neighbours, Meall Crumach, Dun Coillich and Meall nay Eun, leaves a peaceful valley and a magnificently unassuming stone circle here at Lundin. I'm leaning against the largest stone, placed at the east, while the other three jut out on their hairy hillock, lifted clear of the surrounding agriculture. The second largest stone is leaning desperately because of a tree growing right next to it. In a couple of years, the stone will be all the way over. Lundin circle is on the river Tay and on the opposite bank there are cairns and a standing stone. Two other prostrate stones are close to the circle, seemingly thrown down… Three other overgrown standing stones are close by, strewn around the meadow. The western horizon is a feast of shapes, with the huge mountains jutting above the high near horizon, part of the vast range to the south-west. Now Schiehallion is covered in a curtain of mist and cold is approaching … I shall quit writing and wonder a while…

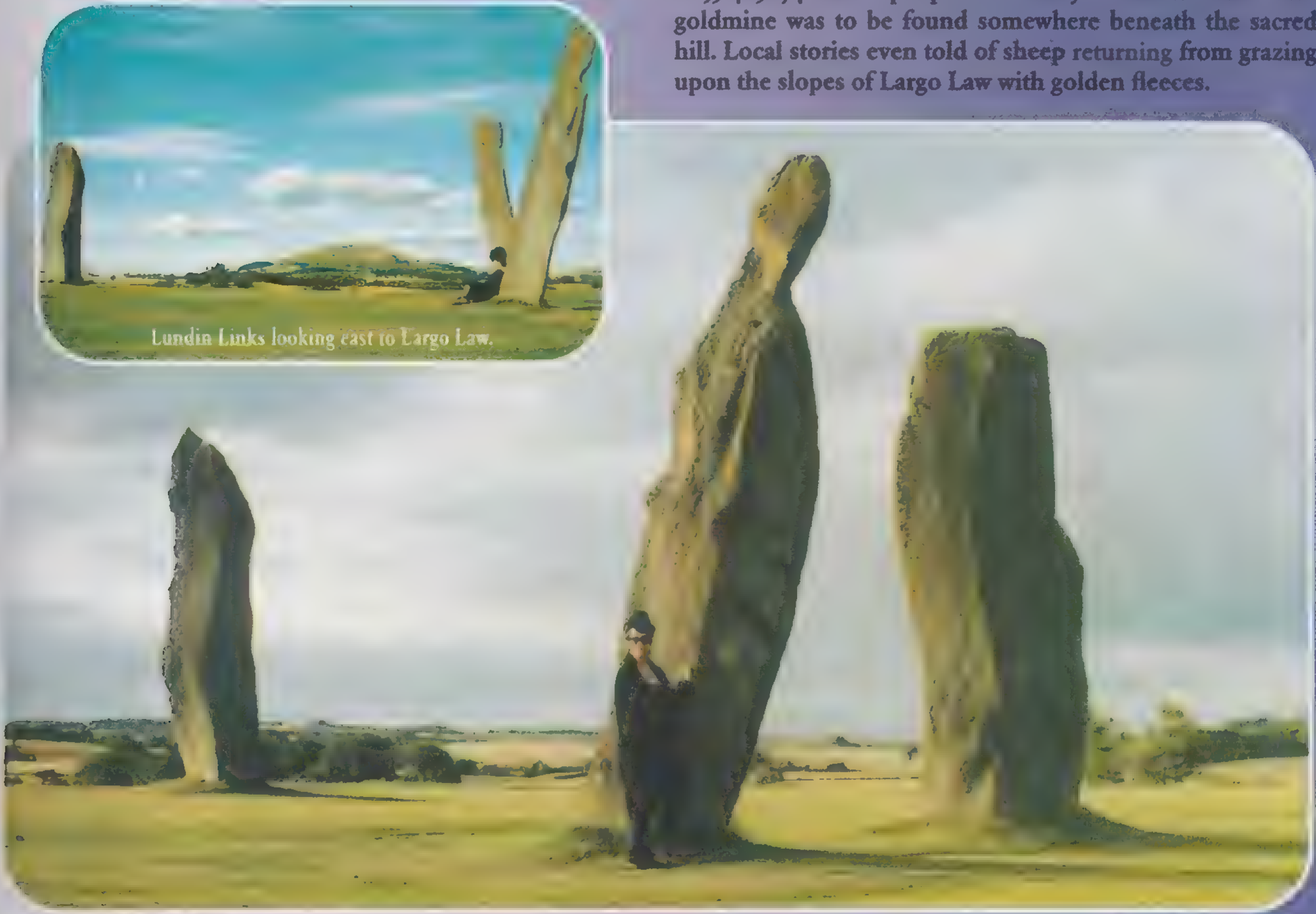
Lundin Farm requires an O.S. map. For Pitnacree, travel east out of Grandtully on the A827. Follow the main road, which diverts over the river – Pitnacree is the tree-covered mound on your immediate right.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
59.405027

6 d) 10

Lundin Links

On Largo Bay in East Fife, the huge remains of the largest of all the Scottish four-poster stone circles rears up in the face of the Mother mountain known as Largo Law. These three wild remaining Goddess stones all stand over fifteen feet tall, one of them looking skyward and contorted with the shoulders of the archetypal Mother stone, found at Airigh nam Bidearan on Lewis and also at Ardlair's Pictish stones.G The stone setting was formerly rectangular rather than circular and until 1792 the enormous missing fourth stone lay in the place where treasure-seekers felled it centuries before. In the early 18th century, diggers discovered a stone kist in the circle, in which bones were found along with a 'round "very curious" object, possibly a v-perforated jet button', all subsequently lost. In his *The Picture of Scotland* of 1827, Robert Chambers tells of the demon familiars Prig, Prim and Pricker, who helped the Scots wizard Michael Scot. Legend has it that he summoned them to the sacred hill of Largo Law with a view to dismantling it, but found more important work for them elsewhere just as they dug their first shovelful. The three demons each threw their single shovelful, which landed next to the wonderfully-named farm of Baldastard, creating the great cairn of Norrie's Law at 59.409074. Local people had always believed that a rich goldmine was to be found somewhere beneath the sacred hill. Local stories even told of sheep returning from grazing upon the slopes of Largo Law with golden fleeces.



Lundin Links looking east to Largo Law.

NOTES FROM LUNDIN LINKS, FIFE: 8.20 P.M., 27TH JULY 1992 CE

What a revealation! Lundin Links is the StennessG of southern Scotland. Three gargantuan twisted pillars, thirteen, seventeen and eighteen feet tall, stretch up to the heavens from the middle of this here golf course. One, like an outsize offcut from the blacksmith's forge, twists at the top to a pinhead… And on three sides are the rolling plains of Fife, a magical hill and suburban sprawl on the other. Lundin Links is a vast monument. From the west, the stones form a Roman 'IV' in the ground. Golfers occasionally pass, making the three look like an unwanted gift from a crazed modern artist. And now, at sunset, the blaze of fire to the west burns my eyes as I lie in this low grass watching my wife and daughter play amongst these three classic megaliths. This was a day, but what a crowning moment!

Lundin Links is a golf village, a fabrication built on the A915 between Glenrothes and St. Andrew's. The stones are on the course at the Women's Club. Ask permission.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
53.195514

Park Neuk

There are two stone circles of Park Neuk, one trashed within trees, the other a pale greystoned four-poster on a fertile green promontory of land with a magnificent view. It is because these stones stand in such a formidable faerie landscape that they transcend any destruction and fling the sensibility of the visitor to the 360-degree surroundings. The traveller's eye is sent to the Hill of Fernyhurst at the north, and at the west the Hill of Cally. This name is an English mutation of the word *cailliche*, meaning 'hill of the Hag'. The first destroyed circle stands within a grove of trees which then gives way to a spur of land akin to a catwalk. Here stands the delightful four-stone ring with exquisite anthropomorphic trees dotted below this magical bald eminence. The stones are extremely small yet robust and who needs more than a question mark to alert the traveller to this heaven?

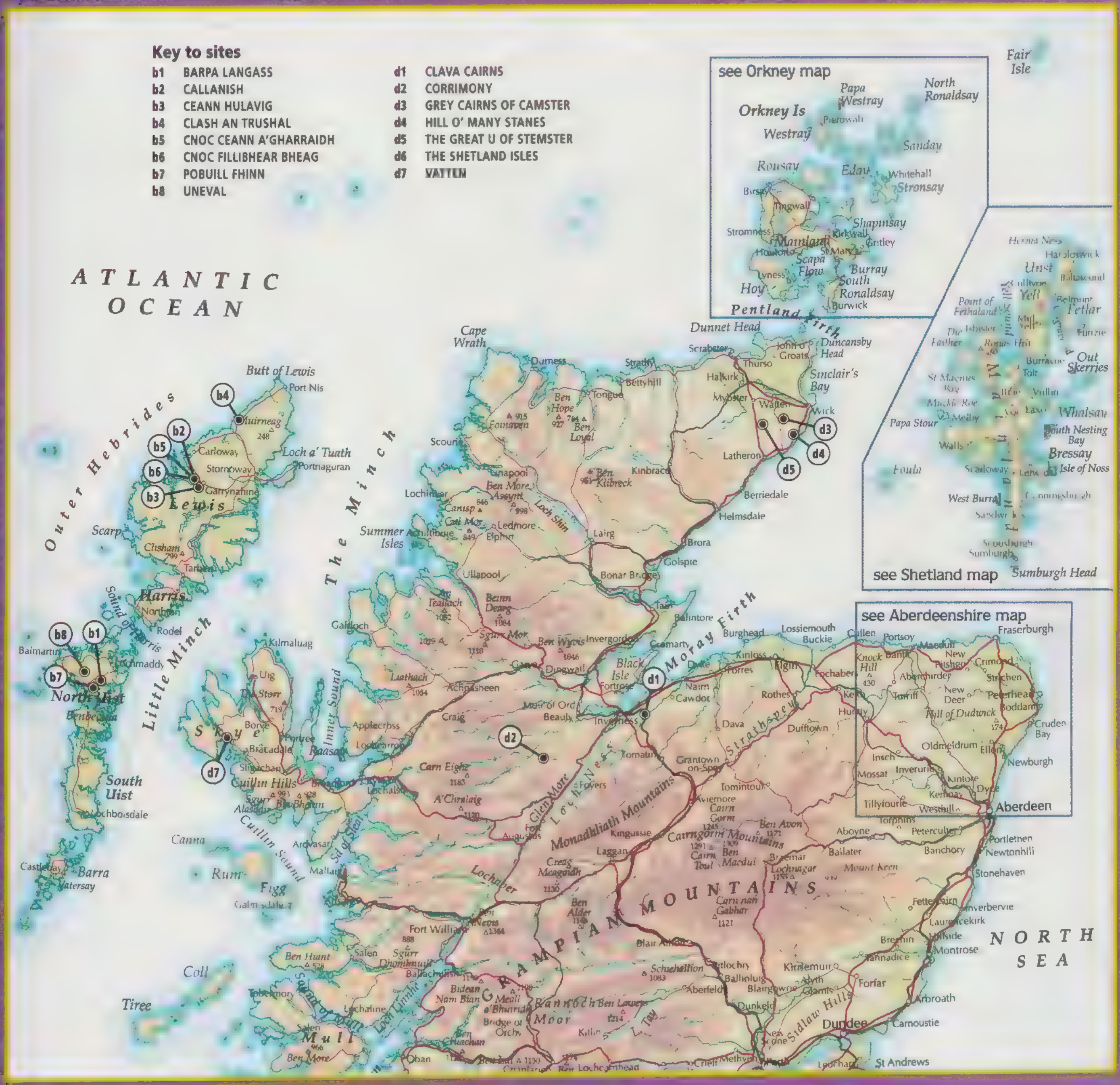
THE CIRCLES AT PARK NEUK, NOTES IN THE RAIN: 16TH AUGUST 1994 CE

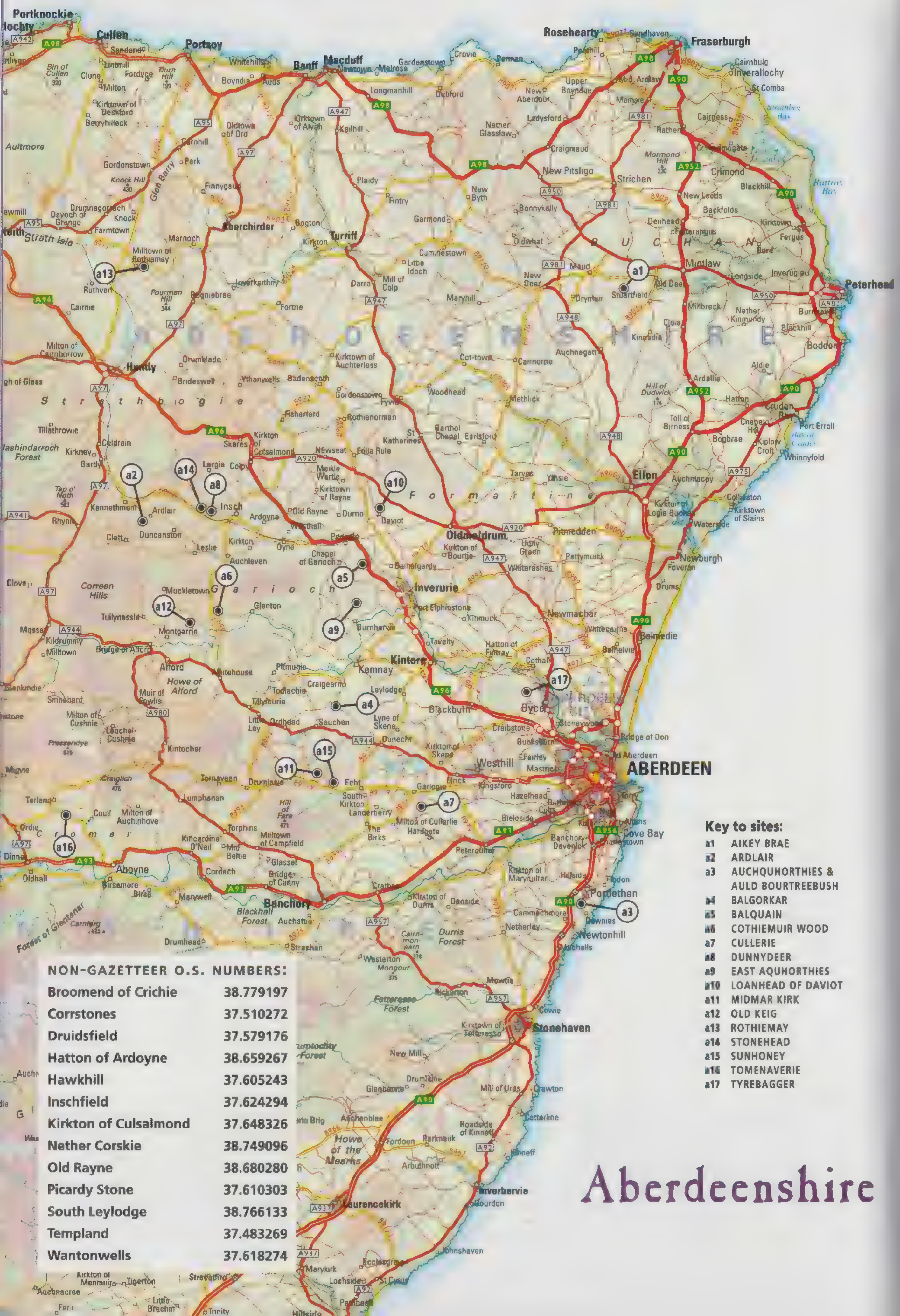
Park Neuk is a faerie tale. On a high beautiful magical moor stands a small four-stone ring looking out over incredible views of mild agriculture and deep wild scrubland. And just 200 paces from the ring is a flattened battered array of former standing stones, so ruinous that they may have included a strange alignment. And growing all around them is the typical fancy, the copse on the hill. I thought I spotted the remains of a causeway as we made our way from the road, but it may have just been the way in which the land was formed. Now the rain is very heavy and my knees are soaking from our visit to Kinballoch circle earlier today. The light has all but disappeared from this moor and on this high peak I am watching the day slip away as fog enshrouds me.

Park Neuk requires an O.S. map.

seven

The Highlands & Islands


Key to sites
b1 BARPA LANGASS
b2 CALLANISH
b3 CEANN HULAVIG
b4 CLASH AN TRUSHAL
b5 CNOC CEANN A'GHARRAIDH
b6 CNOC FILLIBHEAR BHEAG
b7 POBUILL FHINN
b8 UNEVAL
d1 CLAVA CAIRNS
d2 CORRIMONY
d3 GREY CAIRNS OF CAMSTER
d4 HILL O' MANY STANES
d5 THE GREAT U OF STEMSTER
d6 THE SHETLAND ISLES
d7 VATTEN
see Orkney map
see Shetland map
see Aberdeenshire map
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH SEA
Outer Hebrides
The Minch
Little Minch
Lewis
Harris
North Uist
South Uist
Barra
Skye
Mull
Orkney Is
Moray Firth
Pentland Firth
Monadhliath Mountains
Cairngorm Mountains
GRAMPIAN MOUNTAINS
Inverness
Aberdeen
Dundee
Fort William
Wick
Thurso
Cape Wrath
Dunnet Head
Fair Isle
Foula
Sumburgh Head



Portknockie
Cullen
Portsoy
Banff
Macduff
Rosehearty
Fraserburgh
Sandhaven
Inverallochy
St Combs
Strichen
New Pitsligo
Turriff
Aberchirder
Keith
Huntly
Strathbogie
New Deer
Maud
Mintlaw
Peterhead
Longside
Boddam
Cruden Bay
Port Erroll
Ellon
Oldmeldrum
Inverurie
Kintore
Kemnay
Insch
Alford
Newburgh
Balmedie
Dyce
Westhill
ABERDEEN
Cove Bay
Portlethen
Newtonhill
Stonehaven
Banchory
Aboyne
Torphins
Inverbervie
Laurencekirk
Johnshaven
B U C H A N
A B E R D E E N S H I R E
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A950
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A975
A980
A957
A92
A937

NON-GAZETTEER O.S. NUMBERS:

Broomend of Crichie	38.779197
Corrstones	37.510272
Druidsfield	37.579176
Hatton of Ardoyne	38.659267
Hawkhill	37.605243
Inschfield	37.624294
Kirkton of Culsalmond	37.648326
Nether Corskie	38.749096
Old Rayne	38.680280
Picardy Stone	37.610303
South Leylodge	38.766133
Templand	37.483269
Wantonwells	37.618274

Key to sites:

a1	AIKEY BRAE
a2	ARDLAIR
a3	AUCHQUHORTHIES & AULD BOURTREEBUSH
a4	BALGORKAR
a5	BALQUAIN
a6	COTHIEMUIR WOOD
a7	CULLERIE
a8	DUNNYDEER
a9	EAST AQUHORTHIES
a10	LOANHEAD OF DAVIOT
a11	MIDMAR KIRK
a12	OLD KEIG
a13	ROTHIEMAY
a14	STONEHEAD
a15	SUNHONEY
a16	TOMENAVERIE
a17	TYREBAGGER

Aberdeenshire

ORDNANCE SURVEY
30.959471

7 a) 1

Aikey Brae

This huge circle with its speedboat-hulled Recumbent stone stands high on Parkhouse Hill amidst a tree plantation, thankfully clear of the whole view south-southwest. It is remarkably preserved, the bank around the stones still six feet wide and up to three feet high. The pillars are very phallic, one stone in particular featuring a 'glans' at the top. The Recumbent is extremely impressive, with a prow at one end and a projectile shape demanding to be ridden. Chock stones were used under the Recumbent in order to achieve the completely level false horizon. Aubrey Burl notes that the circle is aligned on the major southern moonset.

Between Maud & Old Deer

First when you saw, then you called
That was a great moment
The sacred Hill of Mormont
Always on the horizon
It was a great moment...

I cried out and I gasped
Clasped my hands
to my chest
And was alarmed
at what we saw...

I saw the phallus in every stone
I saw the raw erection bone
Recumbent –
Slumbering and slumbering but peaceful still
The altar on the sacred hill –
The circle on the hill.

The moon that dances
Across the sacred length
The sun that burns above the edgy horizon
The sacred altar stone that
Asks us 'Why?'
Lie back upon the glans
And ask us 'Why?'
Extend your reaching hands
Up to the sky.

You lay on the stone
And were transported
I lay on the stone
And was transfixed
Sunk into a Sci-Fi oblivion
Of spirals – A pavilion of Dreams

And so, perhaps, it was fixed
With spiky Cosmic Jade's tricks
If so, they had us both licked

For each was a sap
Yet each was a Seer
On this Hill of Dreams
Where the Ancients appear
And we knew no fear
between Maud & Old Deer

(AT THE DRUID CIRCLE, AIKEY BRAE)

BLISSED-OUT NOTES FROM THE DRUID CIRCLE AT AIKEY BRAE, OLD DEER, GRAMPIAN: 2ND AUG. 1994 CE

[illegible]

BERRYBRAE NOTE: 2ND AUGUST 1994CE
Here we are at Aubrey Burl's circle, once cleared and excavated, now overgrown and hidden by trees and chest-high shrubs and weeds. One flanker is down, but the other is huge – a great rounded rectangular slab that overpowers the Recumbent ... The circle has two other standing stones and a pronounced kerb, many being very lichen-encrusted, but certain smooth stone-washed pebbles also.

These circles require an O.S. map.

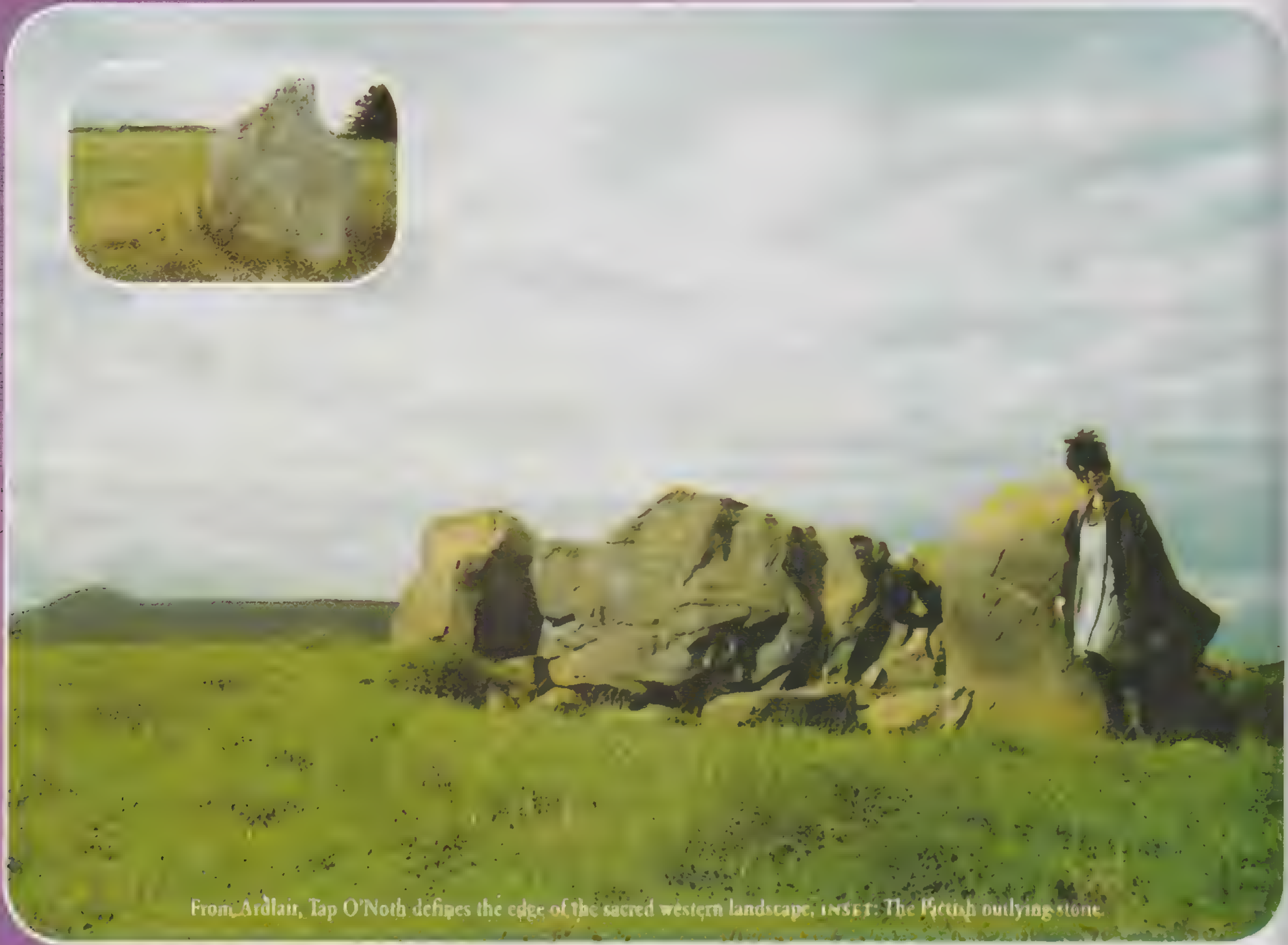
7 a) 2

ORDNANCE SURVEY
37.553279

Ardlair

This stone circle on a hill, looking to the great Mother mountain, the Tap O'Noth, has been badly treated at times and used as a stone dump – the Recumbent stone is not massive but is like tank armour, a shiny matt black-burgundy. The flankers are not huge, and give the impression of being hinged to the Recumbent. These stones came from the Correen Hills at the south horizon. There is a prehistoric standing stone with Pictish 'dolphin' carvings on the path to the circle, and the sacred hill of Dunnideer is just out of sight from the stone circle, visibility cut by recent trees.

Holywell stone circle, which was removed in the middle of the 19th century, created over 500 cartloads of stone for field walls. Holywell stood on the opposite side of the hill from Ardlair and would not have had a clear view to Dunnideer as the nearby hillside obscures the view.



From Ardlair, Tap O'Noth defines the edge of the sacred western landscape. INSET: The Pictish outlying stone.

HORIZON NOTES AT ARDLAIR, NR KENNETHMONT, ABERDEENSHIRE: 1ST SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

It's hard not to rage and scream at this place high above the world and surrounded [on] all 360 degrees by a horizon of incredible beauty. The Tap O'Noth hillfort rises up beyond the Hill O'Noth, creating an unbelievable western Mother hill, a slight belly created by the rising oval hill… The recumbent at Ardlair is a dark grey battleship, military in an armoured way and semi-matt like black gun-metal. Its shape is bizarre. If it has fallen at one end, as large possible packers suggest, then it was once extremely flat and had a cut out of its western end. But Ardlair was used as a stone dump for years and these stones could all be products of field clearance. If so and the Recumbent was never shoved, then [it] must suggest some weird (astronomical) movement over the stone… Ardlair is a magnificent place, more for its place (sic) than for the monument itself.

At Kennethmont, take the B9002 towards Insch. After half a mile, continue straight on where the main road bears left. Pass the first farm (Earlsfield) on the left and park at the next farm. Ask permission to visit the circle. It is a gentle but fair walk.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
BOTH CIRCLES 38.90.96

7 a) 3

Auchquhorthies & Auld Bourtreebush

These two stone circles stand just over 300 yards apart on separate and deserted farmsteads seven miles south of Aberdeen, half a mile west of the coastal A92. Auchquhorthies *(pronounced to rhyme with 'torch kworthy')* stands on a soft southern slope which has been embanked so as to provide level ground for the building of the circle. Unlike the stones of the Dunnideer area, this circle's Recumbent and flankers are not wildly impressive in size, the former being only nine feet long and five feet high. The sheer amount of the twenty-eight circle stones makes up for their lack of physical stature, which ranges from the smallest at just two feet tall to the largest, now missing, which was eight feet tall. In his book *Rings of Stone*, Aubrey Burl refers to a letter from the Reverend James Gordon to John Aubrey, stating, 'that there was a local belief that priests had compelled people to carry good earth to the recumbent stone circle of Auchquhorthies...' Gordon says that this 'is given as the reason why this parcell of land (though surrounded by heath and moss on all sides) is better and more fertile than other places thereabout'. Close by is the enormous stone circle called Old Bourtreebush, a massive platformed site, and though much ruined, the impressive remains are huge skyward standing stones, Alexander Keiller commenting that one of the remaining stones is 'actually the broadest megalithic in the district'. This area of heath is extremely mysterious and Old Bourtreebush is the ultimate 'rude stone monument'. On 30th September 1858, 'excavators' dug into both Auchquhorthies and Old Bourtreebush, along with the four-poster at Craighead and the ring-cairn at Cairnwell, both under a mile from these circles, but such was the speed of their operations that nothing was discovered and a good deal was disturbed.

Auchquhorthies.

Even in its destruction, Auld Bourtreebush is an enormous site.

NOTES FROM OLD BOURTREEBUSH STONE CIRCLE, SOUTH OF ABERDEEN: 2ND AUGUST 1994 CE

Whoa, 300 yards south east of the Auchquhorthies circle stands this fabulous and intriguing site, huge standing stones amidst a rubble ring-cairn of large boulders. White quartz is strewn around whilst the most massive upright (over ten feet) is made mainly of rose quartz with strains of solid white down its flank. Both farms are unoccupied and this place has an extraordinary vibe.

These circles require an O.S. map.

7 a) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.715125

Balgorkar

The gentle position of Balgorkar stone circle combined with the thunderous power of its huge rectangular Recumbent stone and vast slabby flankers creates a wildly impressive monument. On top of a gentle hill surrounded on all slopes by cows and distant trees, the deep flat Recumbent stone looks perfectly level and the sacred precinct within the circle is banked, though in places overgrown with stinging nettles. Ten of the original stones remain upright and there is a destroyed ring-cairn at the circle's centre. To the east around 250 yards in the same field are two outlying stones, about five to six feet and only about fifteen paces apart. Aubrey Burl: 'The circle was aligned upon the major southern moonset.'

NOTES SURROUNDED BY COWS, ON TOP OF THE RECUMBENT STONE, CASTLE FRAZER (SIC) STONE CIRCLE, ABERDEENSHIRE: 31ST AUGUST 1993 CE

This huge Recumbent stone is a place of safety right now. Thirty or more inquisitive cows are eyeing me suspiciously from [no] more than twenty feet away, the closest ones actually munching at my Gortex pants. Castle Frazer (sic) is a beautiful circle, the centre is embanked and the Recumbent stone has been worked flat to make it a superb example. It sits on a low hilltop, with an alignment of two six-foot stones away to the ESE. Aberdeenshire is a maddening place, riddled with circles every sq. mile or so. But Castle Frazer is a perfect hang-out.

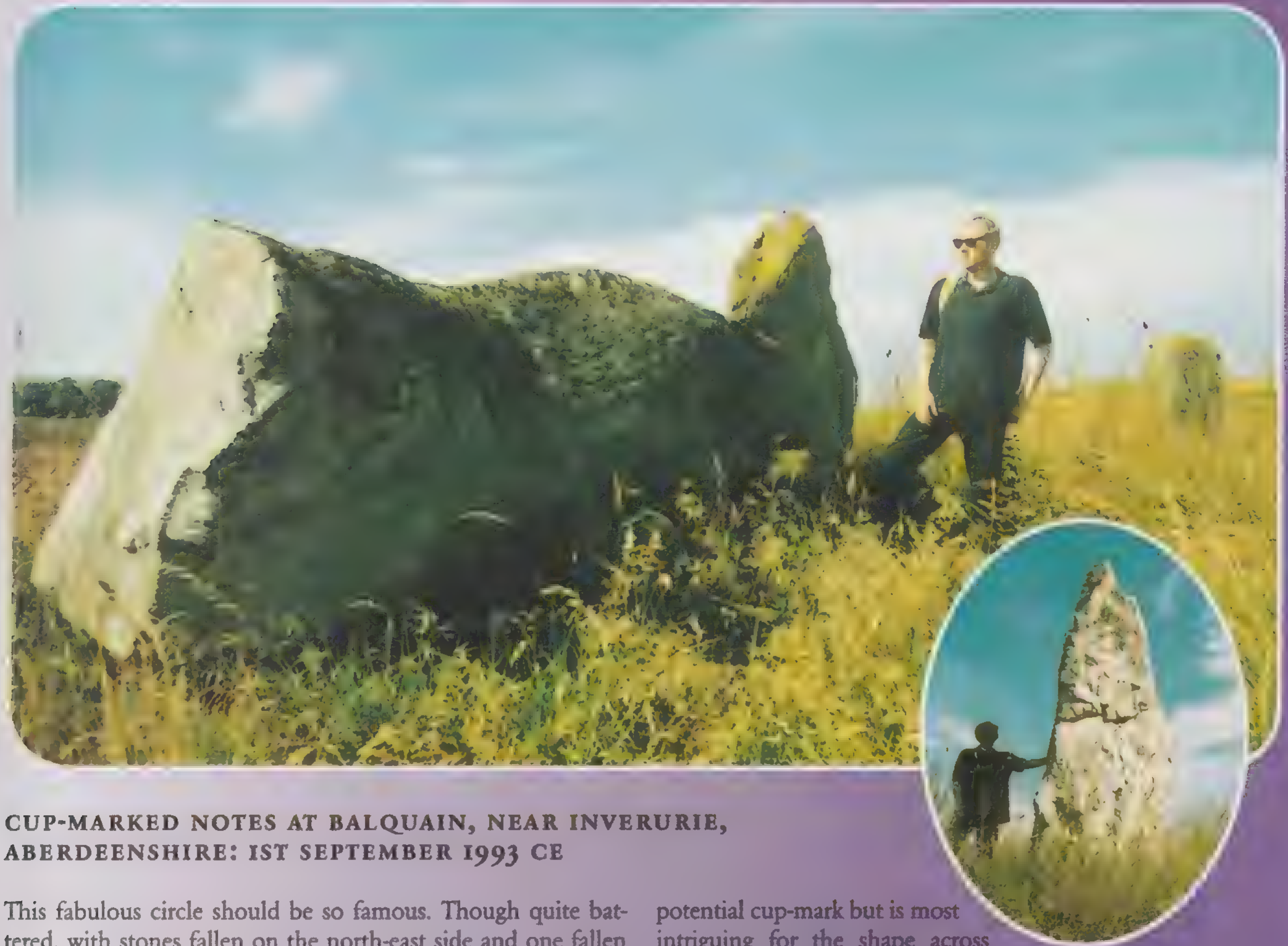
Balgorkar requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.735242

7 a) 5

Balquain

A holy mess of a stone circle, Balquain is a large RSC with a very large quartz outlier and a high narrow Recumbent stone angled to fit with its corresponding near horizon. The circle stands on a levelled terrace upon a gentle slope down the river Urie at the east and looking up to the Mither Tap Mother mountain at the west-south-west. The stones of the circle are of basalt, quartzite and red granite, displaying an attention to types of stone similar to that at Auchquhorthies.[G] The now-leaning Recumbent stone is a wonderful foreign white-grained granite which was selected for its ability to mirror the contours of the near horizon, whilst the stone next to the western flanker has at least twenty-five cup-marks on its southern outer face. Standing extremely close to the north stones of the circle, the huge ten-foot quartz outlier is now lichen-encrusted and weathered by ice. As the ground on all sides is heavily farmed up to the edge of the stones, and the four smallest circle stones have actually been removed, the whole effect conspires to give a very hemmed-in look. Yet Balquain's power is its visibility from the A96 main road and its tantalising position in the middle of deep crops.



CUP-MARKED NOTES AT BALQUAIN, NEAR INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE: 1ST SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

This fabulous circle should be so famous. Though quite battered, with stones fallen on the north-east side and one fallen flanker, Balquain is more than charming – it is bizarre and right out there. I'm sitting next to the cup-marked stone looking south-east into this dazzling September morning sun. The cup-marks are not lit by the sun at the moment, its side being too far in shade, yet the twenty-five cup-marks are breathtaking and are the closest I've yet seen to confirming to any grid. It is the parallel veins in the stone which do this – they are clearly defined ridges and the cup-marks stand out in red chalk from some archaeo-astronomer's recent labour. On the other side of the Recumbent, only six paces from the circle, is a huge quartz outlier shot through with rose quartz too. It's at least nine feet tall and dominates the circle. The huge fallen flanker has four cup-marks, whilst the huge leaning Recumbent has one potential cup-mark but is most intriguing for the shape across its top. Unlike most early RSCs, the Recumbent is not flat, but contoured in a way which seems to follow the near southern horizon over Dilly Hill and Middleton farm; the former still has a ploughed henge remaining. It's unfortunate the stones opposite the Recumbent are so thrown down, as this makes the investigating of the Recumbent's mirroring the horizon extremely difficult. But Balquain is a place for a long afternoon – a treasure in a ploughed field.

Balquain circle is highly visible on the left from the A96 travelling north a couple of miles out of Inverurie. Turn left for Chapel of Garioch and ask permission at the first farm on the right.

7 a) 6

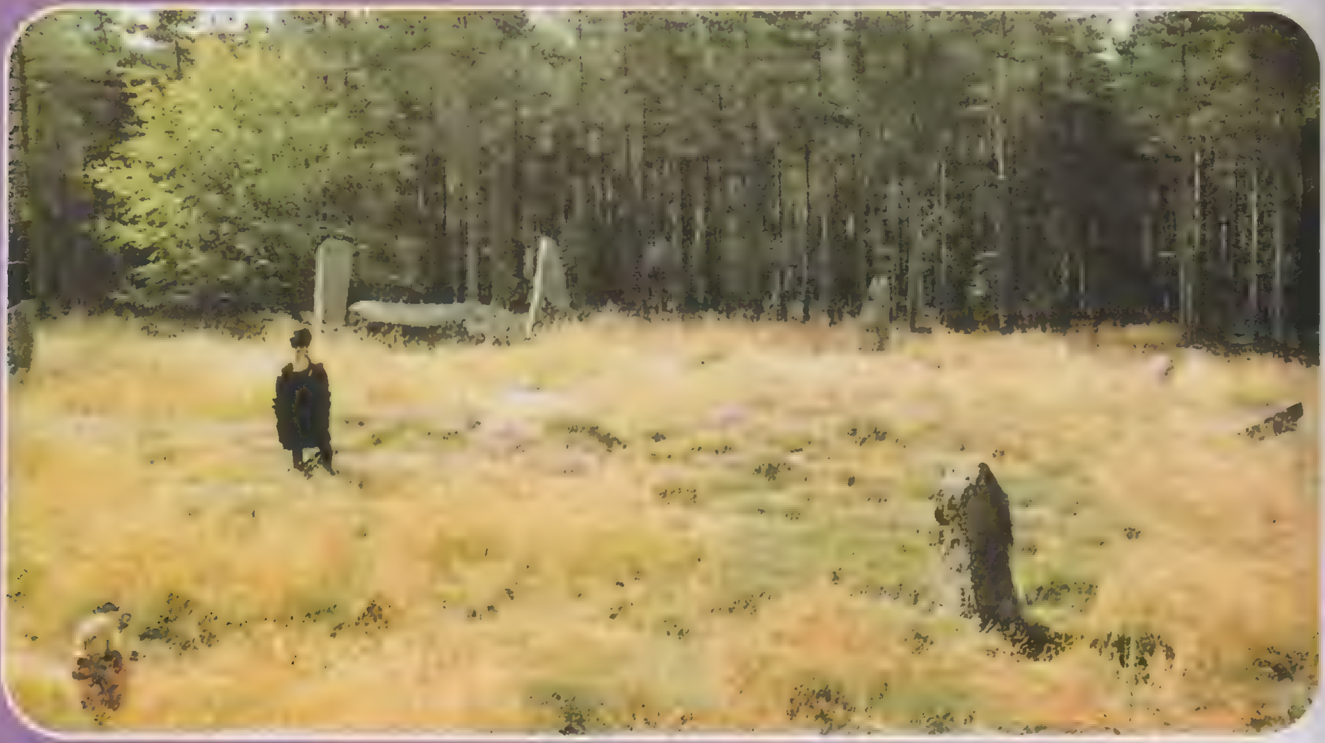
ORDNANCE SURVEY
37.617198

Cothiemuir Wood

High up in the new trees, just a mile from My Lord's Throat, unsignposted, hidden from the road and not on any pathway, stands the extraordinary and magical circle of Cothiemuir Wood. It is surrounded on all sides by young conifers, planted in Forestry Commission rows, but this stone circle has an aura of otherworldliness growing across it deeper than the knee-deep grasses in its centre. Seen from the capstone of the central kist, the tall flanking stones are remarkably similar in shape to north & south-facing wedges or darts; a similar image can be seen on one of the wonderful carved ritual stones at Gavr'inis, Brittany. The two stones are remarkably shaped and extremely tooled, unlike most other Aberdeenshire flankers. In his book *Sun & Cross*, the Swiss writer Jakob Streit writes:

> 'The downward pointing wedge is both an expression and an image of those forces which descend from the cosmos to influence the earth: ripening rays of the sun, the lightning flash that fertilizes the earth, the rays of the moon and the stars, the falling rain and the dew. That is why in ancient Persia, in the spring, the king used to strike a golden wedge-shaped dagger into the ploughed earth as a ray of Ohrmazd, and this gave the signal for sowing corn. The second shape, that of a pyramid with a broad base which tapers as it rises... In prayer, worship and gratitude man raises himself towards the heights.'

Placed directly between these two sleek and streamlined pillars, the Recumbent is a great grey-blue whale of a stone, sagging like a grounded and deflating Goodyear blimp. It is truly a remarkable thing, looking like a fat semi-inflated penis with a vein running along its back. There are very low-lying cup-marks across the lowest most western outer face of the Recumbent stone, known as the Devil's Hoofmarks. The Recumbent & its flankers are both such extreme examples of their respective types that their choice and clever co-ordination created a master circle.



'COTHIEMUIR WOOD, WHO ARE YOU?' NOTES AT LATE EVENING, NEAR KEIG, ABERDEENSHIRE: 1ST SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

I was biting my tongue as we climbed the hill through the wood that surrounds this temple. My friend Doogie (Scott, archaeo-astronomer of Tain) hates woods and RSCs as there's no horizon and no chance of discovering the astronomy. Then I spotted it ... the nine-foot flanker in the trees. Grey and huge, the pillar was linked to a huge pillar Recumbent and next to that a triangular pillar also nine feet tall. Cothiemuir Wood is a stone classic right through ... nearly lost in the deep luxurious vegetation that so nearly swallows you at every step. And in the centre overgrown and hardly touched is a kist in perfect condition with its capstone complete. Oh, Cothiemuir Wood is splendid. No horizon. Just insulation from the world. A lilac-grey vision of timelessness.

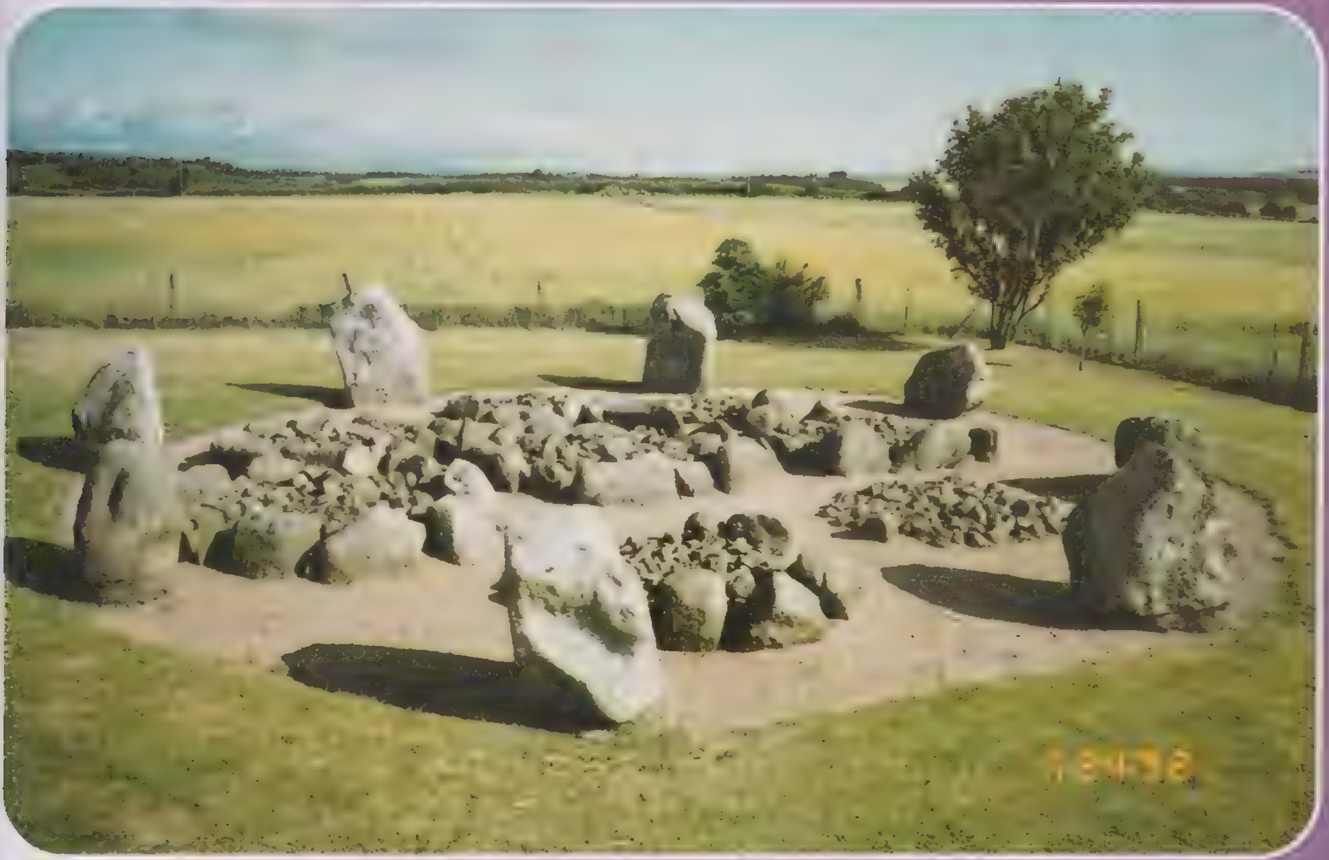
Cothiemuir Wood requires an OS map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.785043

7 a) 7

Cullerie

Built on well-drained gravel in a former area of swamp, Cullerie is a charmingly curious and over-restored Bronze Age cairn-circle at the end of a lazy line of stone circles starting at Corrennie Moor and Tamnagorn, and running through Midmar Kirk^G and Sunhoney^G all the way here. Cullerie is a wonderful colour, its pink granite giving the whole monument a rich fertile glow. The monument was built on levelled ground, and within the circle of small fat boulders, eight small cairns were wedged. These have all now been carefully reconstructed as the site was previously overgrown with peat due to the wetness of its very low-lying position. Excavation showed that the early dedicatory rites at the stones had involved the burning of dry willow branches, whilst burnt bones from skulls and limbs were found in the central ring alongside oak charcoal which had been burned elsewhere. More deposits of hazel were placed in the central rings before the stones of the cairn were placed on top. The site stands off the road next to a tyre dump but within beautiful and quiet countryside with wide views to the east-north-east across Brimmond Hill.



NOTES FROM CULLERIE STONE CIRCLE AND CAIRNS, GRAMPIAN: EARLY AFTERNOON, 26TH JULY 1992 CE

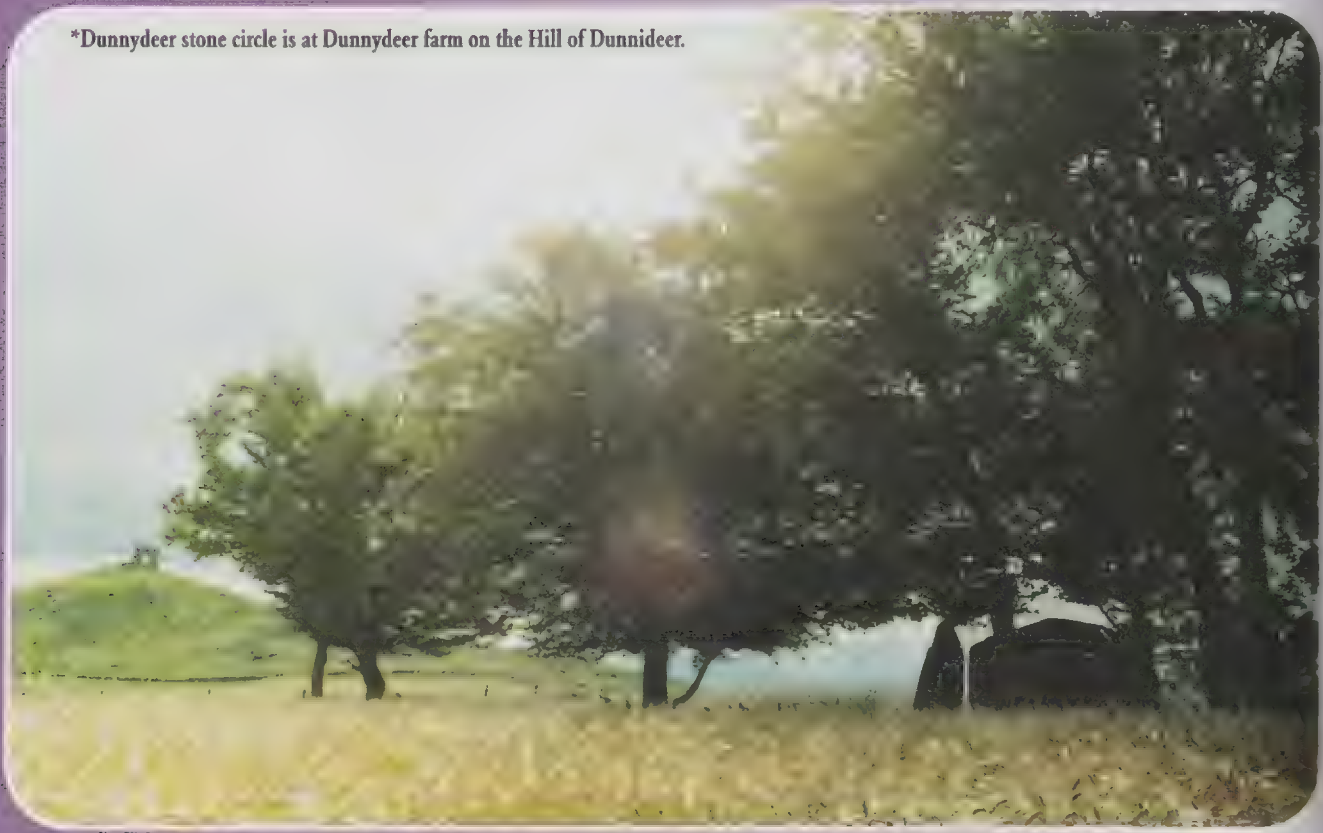
I'm sitting in the central cairn of eight tiny cairns surrounded and enclosed by the eight small bouldered circle of Cullerie. In a neat farming area, Cullerie is at the end of an avenue of conifers bordered on three sides by crops and lying on a flat Aberdeenshire plain. I'm sleepy right now, the rain gently spattering my notebook, but the sun burning my eyes at the same time. For years, Cullerie was used as a stone dump and the mess before excavation has led to a somewhat over-restored stone circle. But that does not matter – for any of its *Home and Garden* perfection is overridden by the circle's classic situation and the ease with which a hang-out can be achieved. In size, Cullerie is not impressive, but then it has no need to impress. In a land of magical RSCs sited on the edge of dynamic plateaux, Cullerie defies all and achieves its singular quality by its unusual prime position. Low ranging hills at 360 degrees and a profusion of thick gorse and thorn bushes make this place a gentle paradise. Above me is clear blue sky but spots of rain are beginning to fall so I should leave.

Travelling on the B9119, at Garlogie take the B9125 south beside the river bridge. After a few hundred yards, there is a left turn signposted Cullerie – the stones are around a mile down this road on the left. In most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
37.609285

Dunnydeer* Stone Circle

The circle on Dunnideer is a very overgrown and difficult to reach monument, but the fifteen minutes of skirting around field boundaries is so worthwhile, even though this circle is reduced to just its Recumbent stone & flankers. The Recumbent has snapped longways and the left flanker is coming adrift, and the whole site is untended and almost forgotten. But the position of the circle as it looks onto the hill of Dunnideer is outstanding and gives the traveller a great sense of hope – the sacred hill with its 12th-century tower castle is one of the earliest in Scotland and built from the prehistoric stonework on the hilltop. It is clearly Dunnideer's long sustained use which enables the Modern to respond right down through every age which has come and gone at this sacred place.



*Dunnydeer stone circle is at Dunnydeer farm on the Hill of Dunnideer.

DUNNYDEER RECUMBENT STONE CIRCLE NOTES IN HIGH POLLEN, HALF AN HOUR AFTER STONEHEAD[G] ENTRY: 25TH JULY 1994 CE

It may be luck (or bad luck!) but Dunnydeer Recumbent stone fits my theory by mirroring the shape of the hill behind it. Of course, this proves nothing more than a line of happy coincidences. Though Balquain[G] mirrors the hills perfectly as did Stonehead, I'll have to do statistics to see how many Recumbents are surrounded by trees.

EVERYWHERE DUNNIDEER – NOTES FROM THE PICARDY STONE, ABERDEENSHIRE: 26TH JULY 1994 CE

We arrived through the long avenue of trees, the Picardy stone obscured until the last moment. Suddenly there was a sign and there she was … Dunnideer! Overshadowing the Picardy stone. This extraordinary carved stone is probably Bronze Age in origin – a good solid menhir, unlike many of the sandstone-type Pictish stones. There is a quartz-type outcrop on the carved face which faces Dunnideer. If not Bronze Age, then the Picts merely carried traditions through – certainly Dunnideer retained its magical/sacred hill status until after 1260 CE, when the now destroyed castle was built.

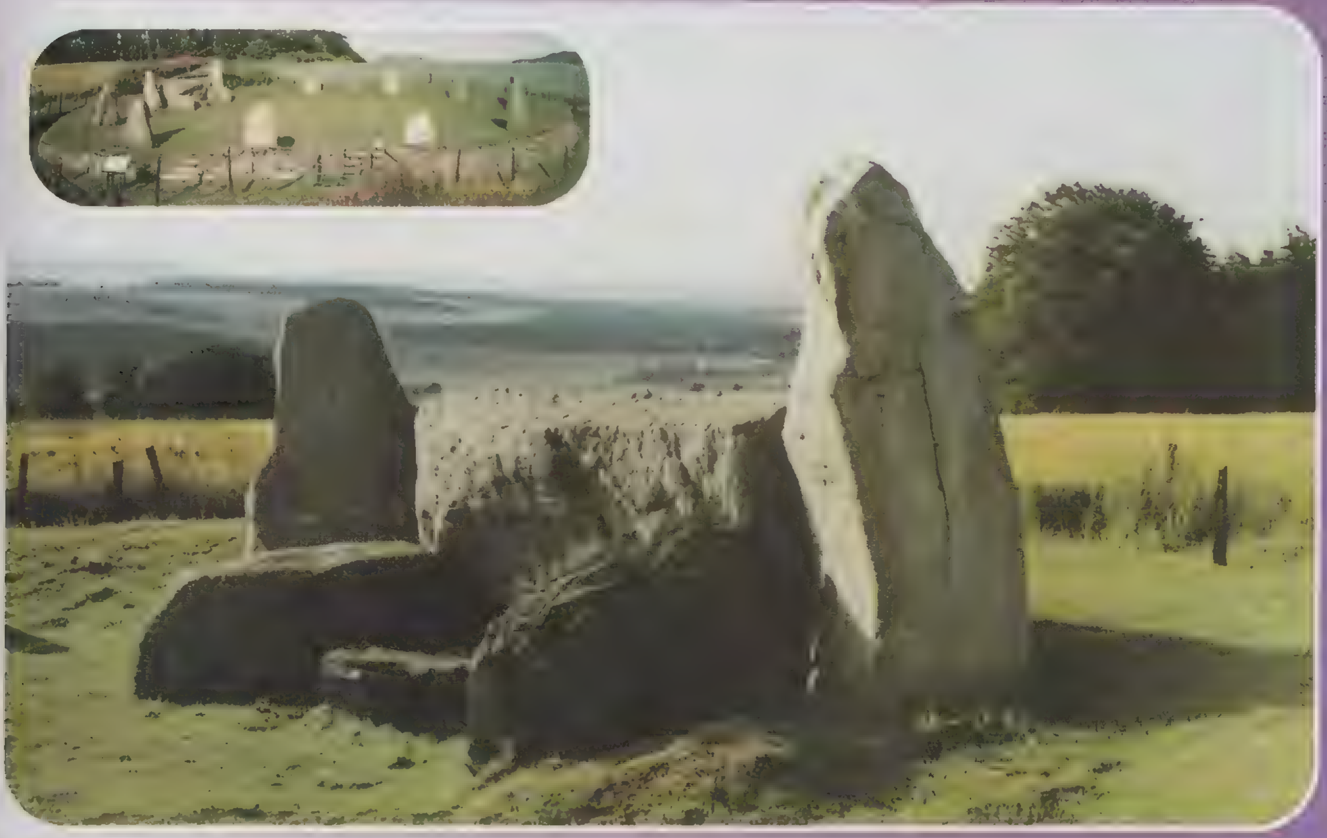
Repeat the directions for Stonehead, but continue three-quarters of a mile to the farm on the right, where you should ask permission and directions to this obscure site.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.732208

7 a) 9

East Aquhorthies

Pronounced 'Easter quitbeez'. Also known as Easter Aquhorthies, this is one of the most famous Inverurie circles and, along with Loanhead of Daviot,G has been quite heavily restored as a showplace. The surrounding embankment wall is new and it is extremely neat, projected as a proud national monument. The whole site is in quiet farmland and it's easy to spend hours on idle picnics. East Aquhorthies is Gaelic for 'stones in a field' and this place is surely a feast of stones, with its huge Recumbent stone of pink granite lined with white quartz. Light grey flankers were here chosen to create the only conscious two-toning in the area. Pink porphyry uprights populate this circle, but it is really the clever use of different granites which renders East Aquhorthies so superbly different. New Forestry Commission woodland engulfs the near horizon, directing the willing eye to the great Mither Tap at the west-north-west.



BREAKFAST NOTES AT EAST AQUHORTHIES, NEAR INVERURIE, GRAMPIAN: MORNING, 26TH JULY 1992 CE

This is a moment. A picnic in mild weather, all of us sitting at the foot of the beautiful Recumbent stone with pickles and cheese, hard-boiled eggs, tea, tomatoes, crackers and strawberries for my Albany, who is smearing the latter down her face and jacket. East Aquhorthies is that strange combination – a neat, almost showcase site with the gentle mystery of Boskawen-UnG and all the other great faerie circles. Modern magic is done here, that's certain – the place reeks of moment and devotion and there are certain neo-Pagan devices around … flowers below the Recumbent stone and the remains of the pot scene. The stones of East Aquhorthies are obviously special – the … westernmost stone is veined and like the bulging head of an erection, very much like one of the main uprights of the TyrebaggerG circle. Amongst the other sandstone blocks and almost opposite the veined stone is a six feet tall slab of deep rose quartz shot through with white quartz and covered in a muslin veil of clear quartz which gives the stone a mighty leg of lamb quality. Now my eleven-month-old daughter is trying to headbutt the Recumbent stone, so I shall leave writing and hang out in this beautiful and magical place.

From Burnhervie, drive north-east towards Inverurie until the road bends round to the left. Continue a further half mile until the road passes right, but a 'dead-end' left appears almost as a T-junction. Take the 'dead-end' for one-and-a-half miles until a heritage car park appears on the left. Follow the signs. In most road atlases.

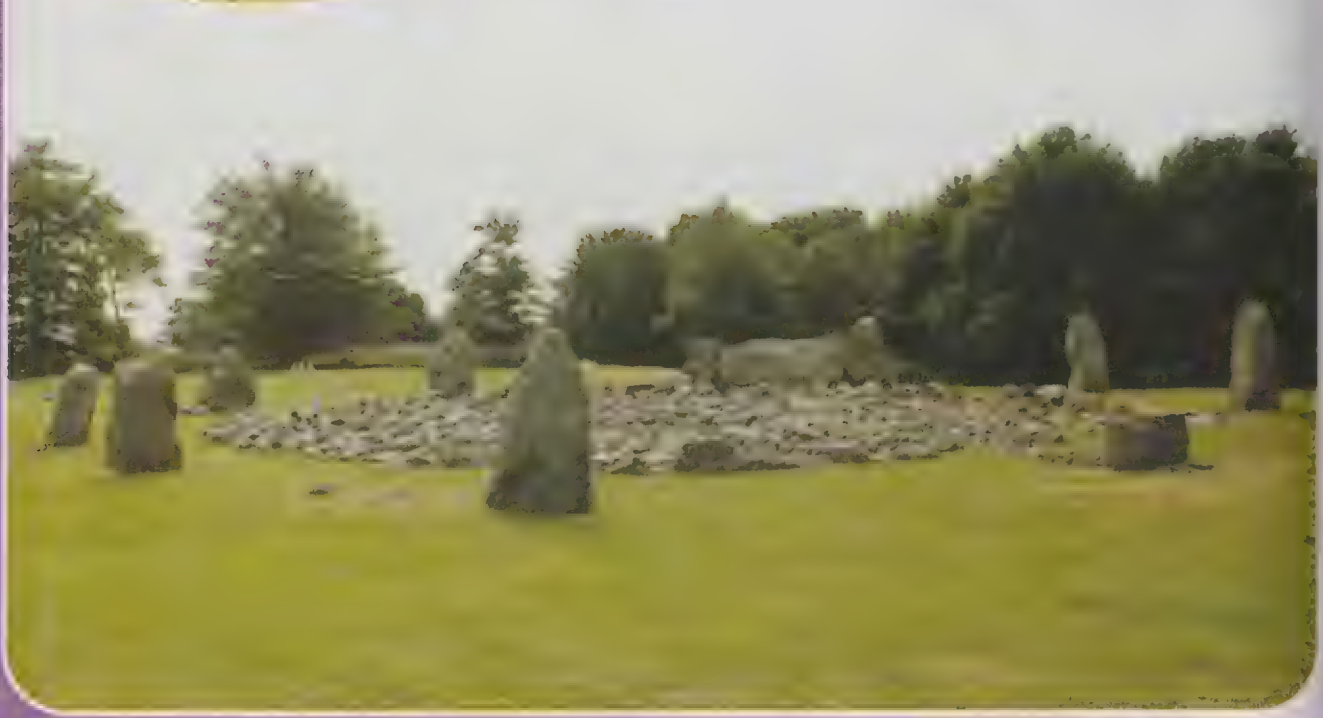
7 a) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.747288

Loanhead of Daviot

This famous Recumbent stone circle & ring-cairn, now in state care and presented as a show site, is surrounded on three of four sides by new woodland, whilst the last side is like a huge idealised country scene. The circle stones are heavy, as is the large split Recumbent, and within the circle is a pavement-cairn of large rounded boulders. Next to the circle is a later cremation area where Bronze Age food vessels were discovered along with human cremations. The 1932 excavation revealed that before any stones were placed, the primary foundation ritual was the burning of a large willow fire, perhaps a pyre, before the present heavy ring-cairn was laid. The erecting of the circle stones equally possessed much ritual, for each was laid in a hole full of cairn-material, charcoal and broken pottery. Now, the frost-ravaged Recumbent has shattered into a megalithic double-bladed razor blade, and the view from behind it is directly across to the huge Recumbent & flankers of the Newcraig stone circle 400 yards to the north-north-east.

CIRCULAR INSET: Just half a mile to the north of Loanhead stand the remains of the great Newcraig circle, its stones embedded in a field wall. O.S. 38.745297.



NOTES FROM LOANHEAD OF DAVIOT STONE CIRCLE, GRAMPIAN: 23RD JULY 1992 CE

What a day this is. Far across the valley the skies have been trailing sunbeams like searchlights tracking over the fields and finally over to us here at this beautiful ancient circle. I have dreamed many months of this place and it could not disappoint. The Recumbent stone is huge and eroded by extremes of weather so that it has shattered along its full length, giving the impression of two thinner Recumbent stones. Within the circle is a cairn bed of stones which is held in place and punctuated by a kerb. I'm sitting in the cleared centre, which is a circle of about eleven feet where there is only cleared ground.

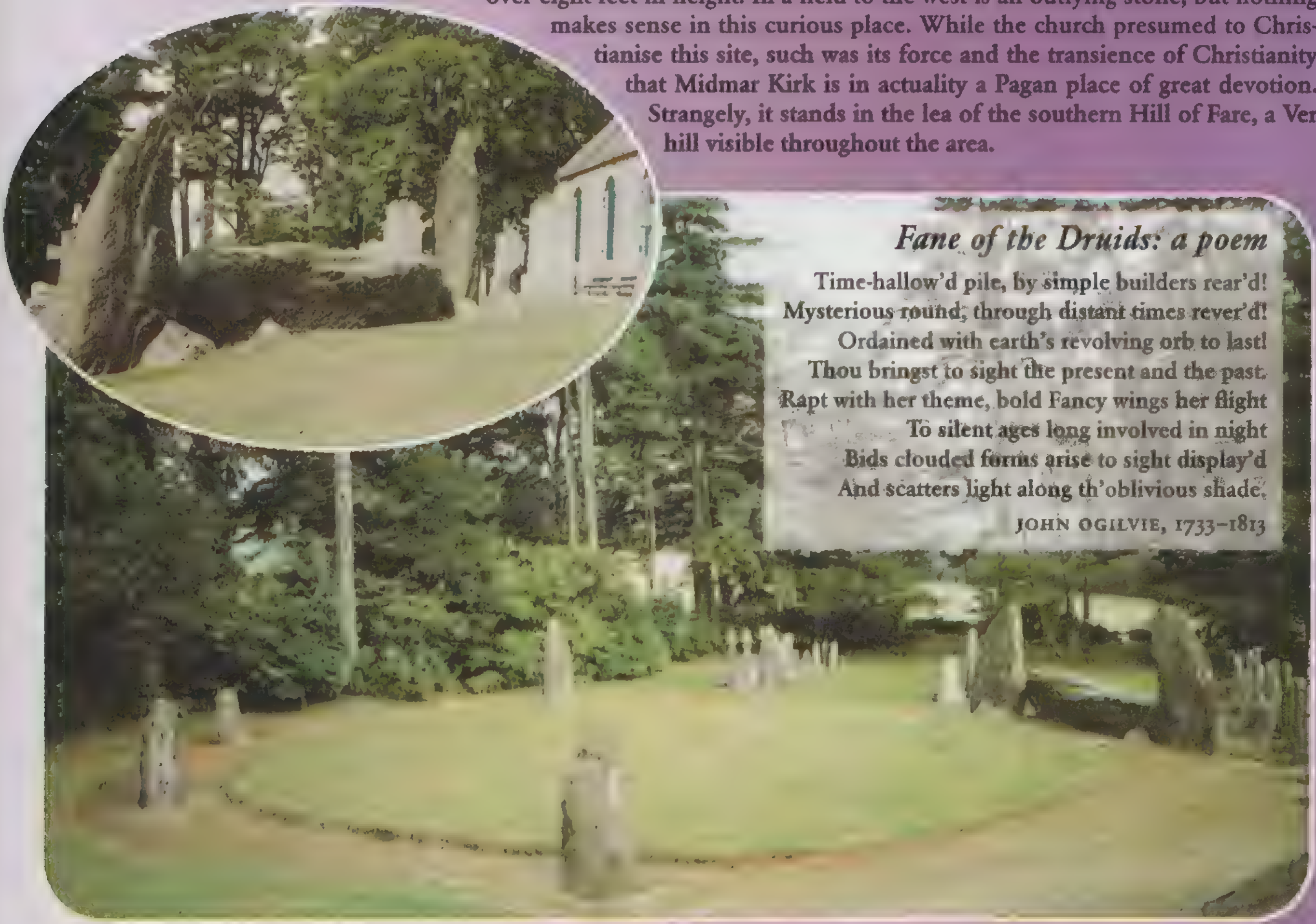
The village of Daviot is situated west of Oldmeldrum and north of Inverurie, off the B9001. The stone circle stands on the raised ground at the north of the village, near the cemetery and scout hut, in modern woodland.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.699064

7 a) 11

Midmar Kirk

Situated in trees overlooked by the sacred hill known as the Barmkyn of Echt, this is a particularly haunting Recumbent stone circle now located within the precinct of a church built in 1797 and the recent churchyard erected, outrageously, as late as 1914! Surrounded on all sides by crosses, the Recumbent stone & flankers of this circle look for all the world like the gigantic horned-god rising out of the living earth. Midmar Kirk is a megalithic Batman-cowl. Were we to dig at the front of the twenty-two ton Recumbent stone, the eyes would surely be revealed. This giant is almost fifteen feet long, its base tapered by tooling, with chock-stones holding the horizon absolutely level. The flankers themselves are each pillars of over eight feet in height. In a field to the west is an outlying stone, but nothing makes sense in this curious place. While the church presumed to Christianise this site, such was its force and the transience of Christianity that Midmar Kirk is in actuality a Pagan place of great devotion. Strangely, it stands in the lea of the southern Hill of Fare, a Ver hill visible throughout the area.



Fane of the Druids: a poem

Time-hallow'd pile, by simple builders rear'd!
Mysterious round, through distant times rever'd!
Ordained with earth's revolving orb to last!
Thou bringst to sight the present and the past.
Rapt with her theme, bold Fancy wings her flight
To silent ages long involved in night
Bids clouded forms arise to sight display'd
And scatters light along th'oblivious shade.

JOHN OGILVIE, 1733–1813

NOTES FROM MIDMAR KIRK RECUMBENT STONE CIRCLE, MIDMAR CEMETERY: 7.30 P.M., 23RD JULY 1992 CE

The sky in the north is grey-black. The sky in the south and that in the east, grey-black too. But the west is blue with shooting stars of white cloud and a sunset … behind the Midmar Kirk church. As I sit with my back against the smallest stone of the circle, I face the huge Recumbent stone and its outliers thirty or so feet away from me. This stone circle was Christianised in 1921 and both the cemetery and the church loom right up to it, but it matters not one jot. Both circle and church are entirely integrated. I see one missing stone from the circle where the road cuts around the church but after visiting South Ley Lodge and the Broomend of Chrichie earlier today, I feel we must put up with that, for this place survives in a most glorious way. Whoever the Recumbent stone circle builders were, they worshipped in a wonderful way. And the Recumbent stone must have given antiquaries great pause for thought, especially during the Druid phase, what with a sacrificial altar stone an' all. Earlier, about one hour ago, we saw a complete rainbow, a beautiful full half-circle against the blue black of the Aberdeenshire sky. Sunhoney,[G] with its cup-marks, is only one mile down the road. This is a glorious night. It's now 8 p.m. and a beautiful sky is shooting out up and beyond this place. Midmar Kirk is haunting.

From Echt, take the B9119 west for about three-and-a-half miles. In the winding forest, look out for the right turn to Midmar. Proceed uphill to the church ahead.

7 a) 12

ORDNANCE SURVEY
37.597194

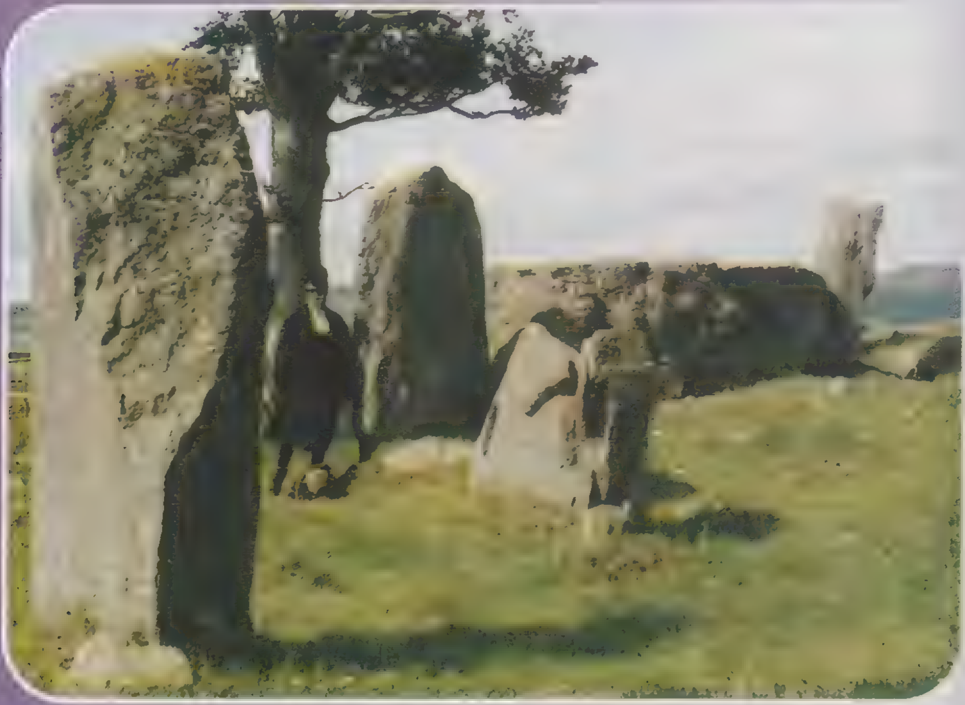
Old Keig

On a southern terrace overlooking the river Don, this stone circle is the great grand-Mommy of them all. This is the one they talk in hushed tones about. How they brought the great Recumbent stone six miles from a place on the river Don. How they pushed it up that slope as they made the last half mile. Old Keig is shelter for twenty on a blustery day but, like Stonehead,^{G} and South Ley Lodge, the monument has really been reduced to just its Recumbent & flankers. The great recumbent is seven feet tall and over twenty feet across. She has a prow like a ship and a climbable walkway at the front. This stone is astounding. The flankers are large but dwarfed to No Comment by that Recumbent. Old Keig sits in absolute peace down a wide tree-lined avenue between two fields, but the legacy of her Victorian excavation still touches the modern traveller, for there are still remains of proto-archaeological destruction around this site. Time passes by and when someone calls, so time re-opens. This magical place is a megalithic cul-de-sac 200 yards from the minor road, but the peace overlooking the valley is as though the world has long stopped.

Song at Old Keig

Old Keig –
the gods of Thunder fly
And the rains that creep in the
grounds they lie
And the winds –
they penetrate the day
And the geese flight
up the old causeway
Gratify my soul
Old Keig – you well
Pray hard to the gods
As the wind does swell
Old Keig
the gods of Thunder fly
Gaze down on the meadow –
The day does die.

(FROM THE TOP OF THE RECUMBENT STONE AT OLD KEIG, ABERDEENSHIRE; 1ST SEPTEMBER 1995 CE)



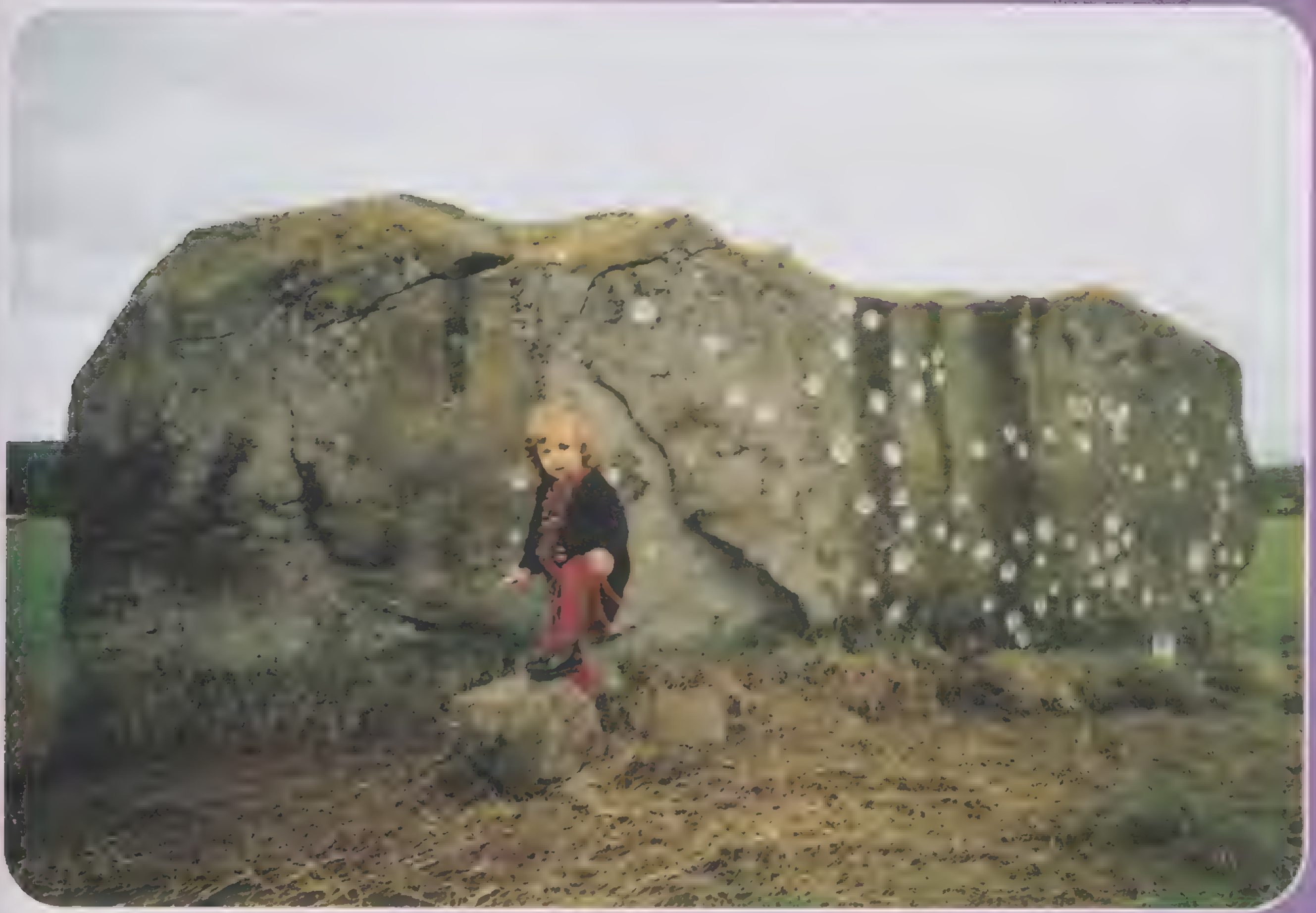
NOTES FROM OLD KEIG, GRAMPIAN: 27TH JULY 1992, MORNING

This is a magical place, an ancient and faerie place. Old Keig is a much ruined circle arrived at down a long avenue of trees gnarled and Disney-like. The Recumbent stone is fifty-three tons, as big as the capstone at Tinkinswood,^{G} and that's the biggest in Britain. Here at the edge of the circle I sit, huge clouds about to deluge us but the sun epic and valiant over above me to my left. The avenue of trees carries on down the hill and this ancient place is glorious as the wind buffets me and the trees sing and shuffle their tambourine leaves. This was the greatest of all the RSCs – by 1692 it was dug into and brutalised but No Thing can take from the builders and that hugest of Recumbents. Six miles they dragged it, the last half mile uphill where no 19th-century 'excavation' nor any 18th-century religious piety freak could dynamite, exorcise or scare the spirits away. The jumble of embanking stones, the roots of the snapped megaliths, the sole surviving upright, all could be gone. But as the Recumbent & flankers remain, Old Keig is a magical glimpse of the once obtainable Golden Age.

Old Keig requires an O.S. map.

Rothiemay

Two hundred years ago, Rothiemay stone circle stood within its own earth-ring, a vast RSC with a huge inscribed basalt Recumbent stone with over 100 cup- and ring-marks, barbells and eyebrows on the top and inner face of this lichen-covered and magical stone. Situated amongst sheep in flat agricultural land north-west of the majority of the RSCs, Rothiemay has taken a pounding in the past and is now minus its flankers. Happily, the size of the Recumbent stone and its symmetrical depredations mean that the whole place at least retains a beautiful balance, the remaining upright stones being large dignified stones. In a north corner of the field is a huge clearance pile of large stones containing some of the lost circle stones. These were dumped here in 1845, whilst other circle stones were taken elsewhere for materials. Doogie Scott has shown a solar alignment through the Recumbent stone at the winter solstice.



ROTHIEMAY NOTES AND CUP-MARK CRAZIES, NEAR HUNTLY, BUCHAN, ABERDEENSHIRE: 2ND SEPTEMBER 1993 CE

This outrageous site is beautifully balanced in its destruction. The huge flankers are gone, as are many of the northern circle stones, yet the remaining uprights have survived in a way that brings extreme balance to the monument. That enormous cup-marked Recumbent is phenomenal on its own; the cups are all chalked at the moment, … creating a sensational effect. In Sweden, all marks are painted in using a burnt orange. Here, the effect is remarkable in a similar way to our Fyfield Down escapade in which we chalked an entire sarsen. I do believe that all stone marks were coloured – Doogie thinks there was a colour-coding system. Certainly, the pots of ochre, etc., found in pottery across Neolithic Britain suggests more than a desire to paint the body with woad. Colour was a necessary part of ritual and we may be too purist in our vision of ancient Man. In the same way that Classicism was unaware that Greek temples were brightly painted, we may only now be on the brink of seeing the extremely practical functions of Neolithic temples. The sight of Rothiemay Recumbent chalked and lichen-encrusted brings a special meaning to this warm September sheep field.

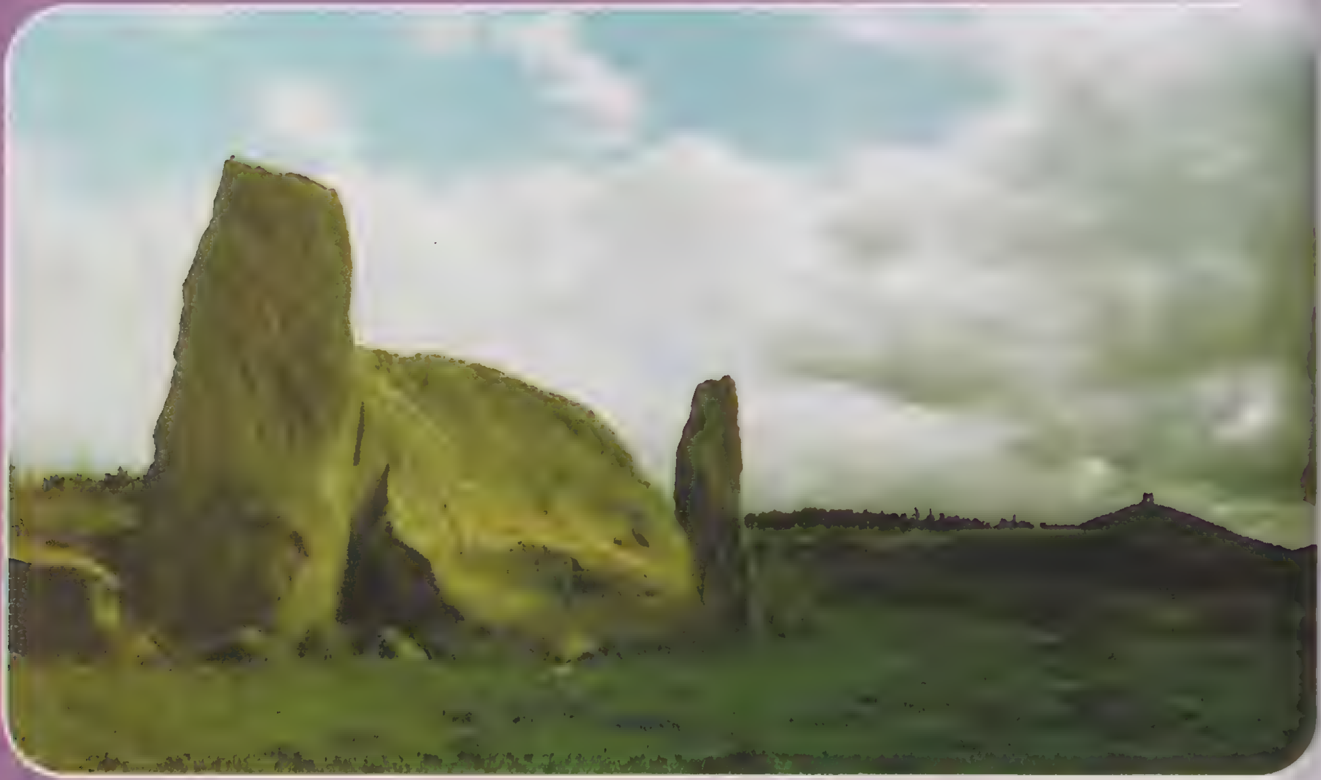
Rothiemay requires an O.S. map.

7 a) 14

ORDNANCE SURVEY
37.602287

Stonehead

This massive Recumbent stone & flankers stand on a gentle valley shelf looking to the sacred hill of Dunnideer. It is a dramatic and inspiring place with wonderful views west to the enormous Recumbent figure of Tap O'Noth on the western horizon. There are no circle stones here at all, though there is embanking on the side of the Recumbent which would have been within the circle. It has been suggested that this monument is complete and never was a circle, though a similar suggestion has been made about the far less impressive South Ley Lodge, alone in its cornfield near Inverurie. Stonehead's megalithic altar is an extremely impressive creation uniting the two Mother hills of Dunnideer and Tap O'Noth. It is highly unlikely that this was an uncompleted circle, for the Dunnideer worship appears to have been taken far too seriously to allow inferior monuments at their most sacred places. A stone altar with no circle stones seems unlikely in an area of such slow-changing traditions.



NOTES IN VIRTUAL BLACKNESS, 'FULL MOON' AT STONEHEAD, NEAR INSCH, ABERDEENSHIRE: 1ST SEPTEMBER 1993 CE, 11.15 P.M.

This is like a scene from an antiquarian's view of Avalon. Away in the near distance is the funny conical hill of Dunnideer. The huge Recumbent & flankers stand awe-inspiringly large, the height quite unbelievable … there always was extreme magic on these hills. The circles clustered around Dunnideer pay homage to its mystery. This is quite crazy now as I try to write and the moon is hardly visible at all. The skies are so changeable here. Clear blue skies at Balquain^G this morning to grey at Cothiemuir Wood.^G As the moon floats galleon-like behind me … Doogie [Scott] operates the flash in the vain hope that the sky will clear. But, for me, who cares, as I'm happy, deliriously happy on this full moon night at Stonehead! *Return to*

Stonehead – Notes in sight of Dunnideer: Mid-afternoon, 25th July 1994 CE: This sacred landscape is a sweet oasis, a Pictish paradise and an equal of Glastonbury.^G As we descended to the valley of Dunnideer, an exquisite and magical spirit enveloped me, amber coloured in its delicate shading, but powerful, gloopy and a heady potent assault. I'm sitting gazing at the Hill O'Noth sacred Mother mountain, buffeted by the wind but flattened and on my back only minutes ago. A small arcane railway chuffs through the valley, but up on Stonehead it might as well be a scene from a famous piece of fiction. This is a paradise.

Travel west out of Insch on the B9002, passing Dunnideer itself. Travel down the valley and take the first right turn across the river/railway to the other side of the valley. Turn right at the end of the road and continue back in the Dunnideer direction. When Dunnideer rears up on the right, look for Stonehead at right in horse pasture.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
38.716056

7 a) 15

Sunhoney

Enclosed in a mysterious copse of trees on the land of a very friendly farm, this large RSC is even now like a working church of the old religion. Modern witches celebrate their festivals here and the atmosphere is thick with the clinging mist of the past. The elegant and narrow slab of a Recumbent stone has fallen, or been pushed, backwards, revealing the many cup-marks on its deep inner face. There are no long unrestrained views due to the antiquarian copse of trees and lush vegetation, but Sunhoney's very restrictedness generates a cocooned and safe atmosphere to the traveller. The circle's trees allow such wondrous shafts of light to shine through onto the red granite and gneiss that the stones light up the entire area in the sunshine. The fallen Recumbent is of a grey granite with thirty-one cup-marks on this fallen slab. Burl has suggested that because of the great height of the horizon, instead the circle was aligned 'towards the saddle between Meikle Tap and Greymore, the place where the southern moon at its minor setting would descend'.* By our 1994 CE trip, Sunhoney farm had become Corrieburn farm, but we had no chance to ask why.

NOTES FROM SUNHONEY, NEAR MILL OF HOLE, GRAMPIAN: MID-AFTERNOON, 27TH JULY 1992 CE

Sunhoney is smart today, her high grass swished and scythed back as I sit against the left flanker and watch the farmer go about his work. Now a small white dog has approached me and I am, as usual, intrigued by this place. At Sunhoney, the weather changes dramatically within minutes. As we arrived here there was sunshine; as I walked through the field of corn it rained. Two days ago, the sun went in and a rainbow appeared. There is nothing everyday about Sunhoney – even the farmer's scythe is an addition to the place. Overgrown last week, I heard that it would be cut back and I dreaded such cissification. Now the grass is short and the atmosphere is picture perfect. Only East Aquhorthies[G] is close to this circle – for that circle has the addition of individual and extraordinary stones, whereas the epic of Sunhoney is its completeness and its uniformity of weathered sandstone. Also that extraordinary cup-marked Recumbent, pushed on its side forever ago, raises Sunhoney to a feeling beyond all the ruined or restored places. Sunhoney – I love you.

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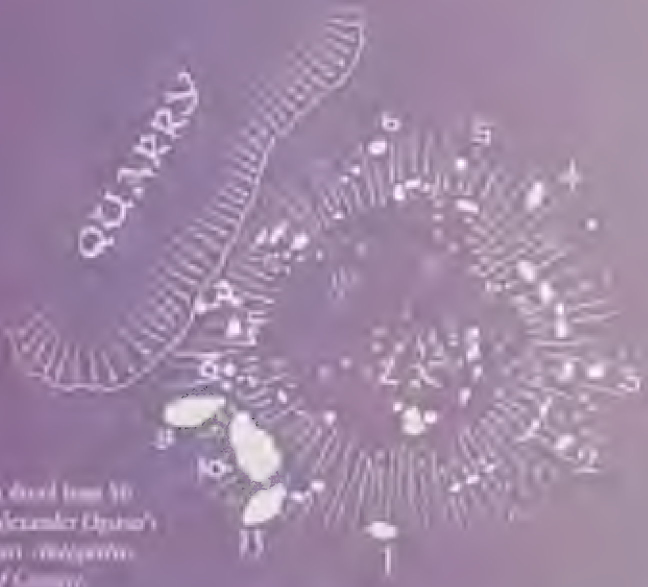
* Aubrey Burl, *A Guide to the Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany*

Leave Echt travelling west on the B9119. After approximately two miles, look for Sunhoney farm on the right, recently renamed Corrieburn. The farmer [illegible] friendly and helpful.

Tomenaverie

Tomenaverie was probably a natural temple long before the stone circle was erected on its mount, for the name of this circle means 'Mound of Ver' or 'Hill of the Faerie'. It is likely that the stone circle came much later, for Tomenaverie was a proto-Neolithic temple with or without stones. Unfortunately, this circle is as famous for its rape and ruin as it is for its perfection on the landscape and the power of its stones. On three of four sides, a deep quarry has long chewed its way around the outcrop on which Tomenaverie stands, so that the circle must be approached by an ever-diminishing causeway of rock. The large Recumbent of dark basalt and the pale red granite flankers were viciously thrown down at some time, whilst the red granite circle stones are clipped and battered and even removed. But once the initial feeling of affrontery has passed, it is easy to gasp at the beauty of this sad stone setting. And even as long ago as 1904, Fred Coles, seeing the depredations of the quarrying, commented that the quarry was 'close up to, within indeed 3 feet of, one of the few Standing Stones yet in situ'.



A detail from Sir Alexander Ogston's 1931 Antiquities of Cromar.

On Tomenaverie

Tornadoes swept through Tomenaverie
Ancient temples have to take
The vitriol of modern law,
The binding of the Sage's jaw
So no-one hears the muted circle
As they carry out their chore.

Blasting out around the circle
Quarrying away the circle
Slowly creeping, every creeping,
Closer to the ancient stones.

Soon the stones of Tomenaverie
Will be stranded all alone
A crown atop a giant stage
An inward facing brotherhood
And lashed upon this windswept stack,
I crouch and write,
As gales they bite,
This freezing July afternoon
A strange and pitiful delight
To see this place – and still it pleases,
Turns the wild tornadoes into breezes.

(3 P.M. IN THE CIRCLE: 27TH JULY 1992 CE)

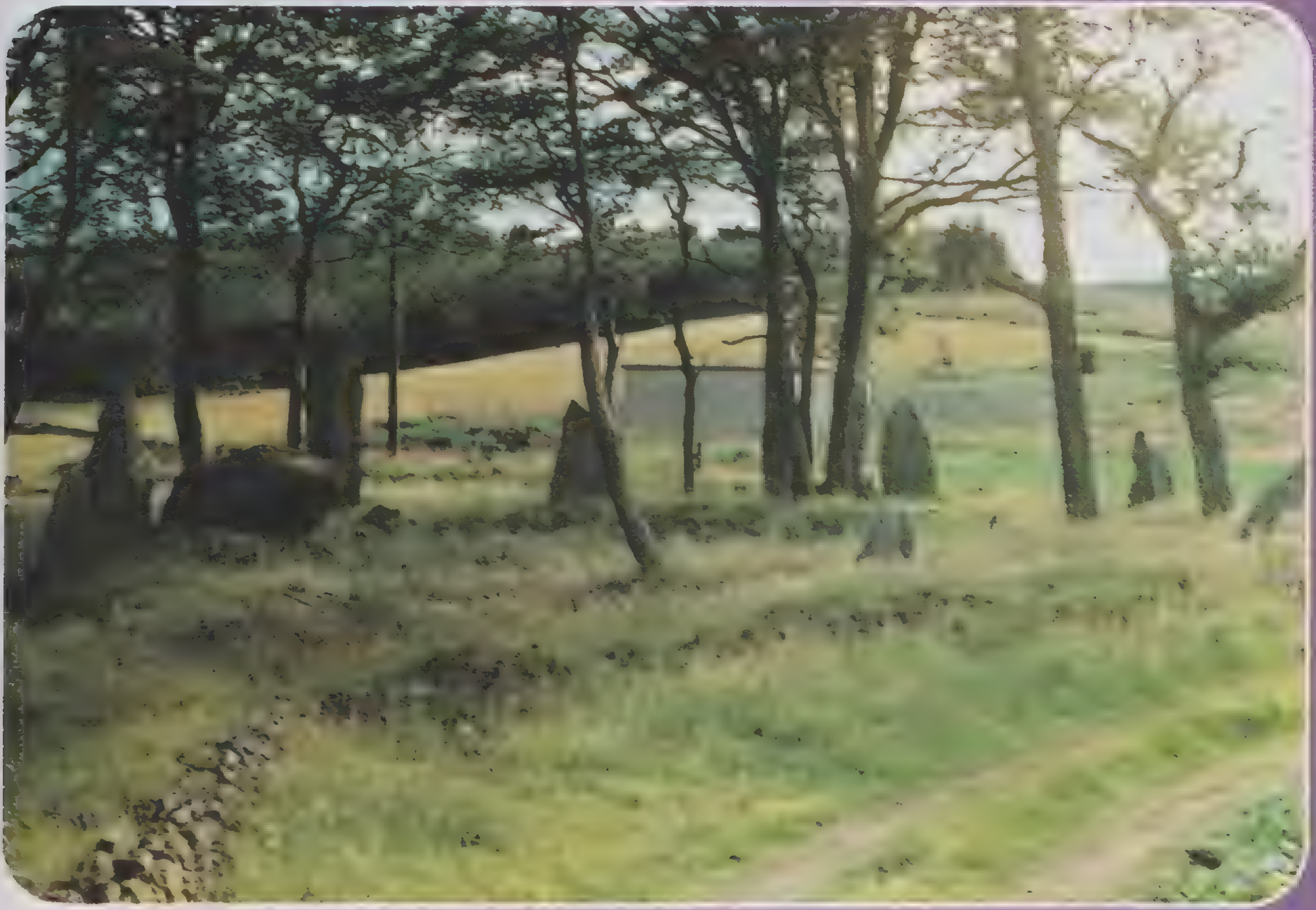
NOTES ON TOMENAVERIE, ABERDEENSHIRE: 3 P.M. IN THE CIRCLE: 27TH JULY 1992 CE

Today is a freezing wind-lashing gale. I write with hands that barely hold the pen, though I am so angry with the contempt shown to this circle that I must write a poem… At the behest of my wife Dorian, I declaimed the poem 'On Tomenaverie'.

Tomenaverie is signposted off the B9094 from Aboyne to Tarland, about one mile out of Tarland. On most road atlases.

Tyrebagger

Of all the classic RSCs in Aberdeenshire, here is the most truly Druidical temple of them all. Behind Dyce airport, in a tree-ringed copse on a hill, stands this Pagan and proud monument, its formidable red granite stones seemingly unaffected by the poorly placed aircraft-approach aerial which stands so inapproppriately only thirty yards away. The Recumbent is a formidable dark grey stone around ten feet by ten feet but leaning in a state of permanent and glorious collapse. There is always evidence of modern ritual here and signs of a ring-cairn are hard to make out under the litter of beer cans. But the arduous climb up the farm-track from the airport service road is rewarded by a stone temple where the mists of time cling, seemingly tangible as old cobwebs. Do not be put off by the encroachment of modern Man – Tyrebagger has us all long beat.



DELIGHTED NOTES FROM TYREBAGGER RECUMBENT STONE CIRCLE: 6.20 P.M., 24TH JULY 1992 CE

As fantastic a place as we have seen on this Grampian trip, Tyrebagger circle is up with Sunhoney^{G} as the greatest example of unrestored recumbent circles… Here we are with a complete and beautiful site, high above Aberdeen airport, in sight of the industrial estate, yet it transcends all that… Within the circle, a couple of large trees grow. The Recumbent is leaning forward but … gargantuan. This is a real 'heads' place already – you can see that: there's the remains of a fire and certain offerings around and the smell of onions in the field next to us is tripping me right out. Now I'm sitting with my back to the smallest stone looking at that wonderful horned upright to the right of the Recumbent stone. Tyrebagger is a weird place. 'Jesus rose from Satan' is carved on a nearby tree – he didn't at all. That's just the Church messing people up. But I don't care one tiny bit – this is a place of massive appeal. I'm dancing at the pleasure of this sacred spot. Yeah, the city and the airport and all that other industrial kaka – it doesn't even touch this place. Time dimensions here just get TRASHED!

Tyrebagger requires an O.S. map.

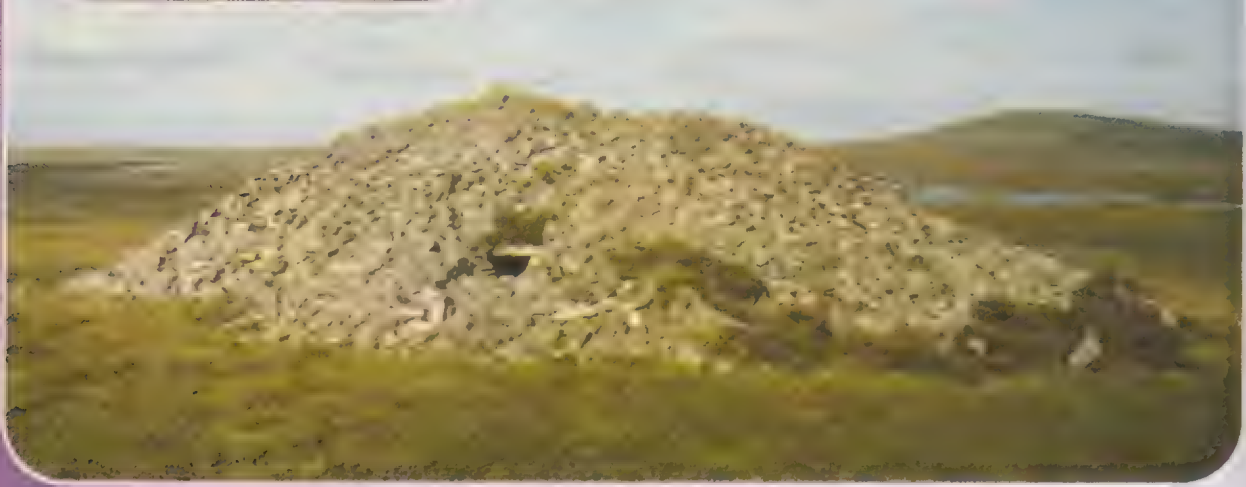
7 b) 1

ORDNANCE SURVEY
18.838657

Barpa Langass

On North Uist's unreal watery landscapes, the great round cairn of Barpa Langass rises high on the side of the great Ben Langass, like a crystalline medal on the side of this remote mass. For, like the rest of North Uist, Barpa Langass is made entirely of Lewissian gneiss, that same stone which created Callanish[G] – and a magical fomula. Outside, Barpa Langass is like the round cairn at Camster.[G] This large cairn is eighty feet in diameter and rises up to about fifteen feet in height, making a formidable and bejewelled sight. There was formerly a peristalith wall around the base of the cairn to support its height, but this has gone in many places. The scramble passageway leads into a magnificent chamber of exhilarating Lewissian gneiss, and even though the chamber is over nine feet by six feet by seven feet high, the walls are made in five large slabs, whilst the roof is formed by just two large capstones. Seeing an ancient monument with such large faces of unusual stone is a powerful experience. Excavators found pottery, a scraper, a barbed arrowhead and a 'pierced talc disc'. These finds are now in the National Museum in Edinburgh.

North Uist to Skye, notes aboard Caledonian-Macbrane*: 14th August 1994* CE*:* As I climbed up to the cairn, I was convinced of huge headlights up the local road. But whenever I looked back, there was only the total desolation of the Lochmaddy–Carinish road. My hood surrounded my face and light cascaded around me as the huge cairn billowed and cooed in the night… Then I circled the cairn widdershins and extremely slowly. The beauty and overt vibrations from the cairn made me stop several times. It glowed so much larger than life that I was paralysed for a few moments, but resolved to continue to the cairn's entrance.



TRUE DELIGHT AND NOTES FROM BARPA LANGASS, BEN LANGASS, NORTH UIST: 11 P.M., 13TH AUGUST 1994 CE

This is one of the greatest sacred chambers that I ever have visited. The great chamber is a roaring great lightfield of sparkling Lewissian gneiss. Imagine a huge Neolithic chambered cairn with a full interior of Callanish-style stone. Ha! Yooooouv'e gottit!

I visited Barpa Langass (Langais) at 8 a.m. this morning as the clouds and the sun were working out a particularly fine drama over towards the mountains around Loch Maddy. I climbed to the top of Ben Langass and was awestruck by this island of North Uist. Now, I am sitting inside this great Neolithic chamber, resonating around the island. For Great Barpa Langais is visible in its high ridge for miles around. As I approached tonight, the radiant sun had been usurped by rain and a blitzkrieg of dark slow-moving freight clouds. I have lit six candles in the chamber and had been nervous of entering this place – but now? The day's fraught hours are ebbing away and I'm writing large as doubling the spaces on my notebook would be impossible in this semi-darkness. I am slowly recharging my batteries after the slow burn off at Callanish. I'm rambling. I'll leave… (*Inside, sheltered from the rain and the windy moor, in total silence. 13/8/94* CE)

Barpa Langass requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
8.213330

7 b) 2

Callanish

At the head of Loch Roag, on the north-west coast of Lewis, the standing stones of Callanish punctuate the low spine of the near horizon as the visitor first enters the little community over the hill twelve miles from Stornoway. Callanish stones are the stuff of legend. They reek of cosmic ideas. One legend tells of black men who arrived in boats with a high priest who directed them as they built Callanish. Another legend told that on midsummer morning as the sun rose, the 'shining one' would walk down the stone avenue, his arrival heralded by the call of a cuckoo, the bird of Tir-nan-Og, the Keltic Land of Youth. On the distant south-west horizon is a curious phenomenon called the Cailleach na Monteach, or 'Old Woman of the Moors'. She is a recumbent figure created by the rise and fall of the horizons, mountains and valleys, and has been known to the locals since time unknown, often referred to as Sleeping Beauty. It is in this general setting between reality and myth that Callanish stands, and visitors who do not accept this inbetween world tend to have a peculiar time there.

Only a visit to this bizarre landscape can explain the experience of Callanish. It has intoxicated all the writers who have seen it and is the scourge of souls at times. If you want any real education, skip the visitor's centre and call Margaret & Ron Curtis at Callanish 13. Meet them at the stones and have a guided tour of as many sites as you can take in (insist on Achmore) – then back to their museum/gallery for tea and a good stare. Buy their video. Immerse yourself in Callanish and you will begin to understand the refined way in which the megalithic Lewissians deported themselves. For a clear understanding see Chapter 6, 'Margaret at the Stones'.

NOTES FROM THE ROCKY (CNOC AN TURSA) OUTCROP, TWENTY YARDS SOUTH OF CALLANISH, OUTER HEBRIDES: 29TH JUNE 1992 CE

Today in light wind and warm friendship, I sit at Callanish – the stones perplexing a variety of people and the blue sky shot through with distant explosions of white quartz cloud which reach high above the monument from its source on the far SW horizon. The world we live in is a very difficult place to judge today, for I am high above civilisation at the top of the European world. Here, the humdrum means nothing – here the extraordinary is expected. Overlooking the Iron Age settlement which drops to the slopes of the hills descending to the loch, it's clear that this powerful place was revered at many separate times. The stones are shining and rise to each visit from each curious person... Callanish is approached from many miles, visible on this distant headland but distant enough to cause heart-stopping palpitations. As we drove from Stornoway, the anticipation became too much. Now we have been here for three days, we wake up and draw the curtains and there is Callanish on the distant hilltop... A lump in the throat and tears in the eyes – the last miles of this pilgrimage would have been too much to contemplate. I think people always travelled miles to Callanish. It was not for some local community. Like Avebury,^{G} Stonehenge,^{G} Brodgar and their ilk, Callanish was placed at a real outpost for the journey as much as the arrival. The battle to get here is everything and the feathered man who built it knew quite well what he was doing.

Drive to Callanish down the A859, then right towards Achmor and Gharraidh na-hine/Garynahine, continuing until you reach Callanish, now spelled Calanais. The stones are on the near horizon – unmissable.

Ceann Hulavig

Pronounced 'Key-ann hulavig'. The tall stones of Hulavig stand on the high hill at the end of Loch Hulavig, exactly two miles south of the main Callanish^G site. They are most easily approached from the local B8011, which passes the circle at the bottom of the hill just 400 yards to the south. This most weathered of all the Lewis monuments stands within a quagmire which extends in a circle just beyond each of the stones, which all stand between seven and nine feet tall. One of the stones is missing at due west, and the central kist is depleted to a mysterious mire, but this magnificent ellipse is a giant. From Hulavig, the aspect of Sleeping Beauty is remarkable (*see Chapter 6*), and she appears framed between two hilltops as though cradled like an infant. The circle has been written about by many antiquaries and archaeologists in the past, appearing as Cean Thulabig, Tursachan Ceann Thulabig, Garynahine, Circle 3, Callanish IV and Lewis 5. The Danish antiquary Jakob Worsaae visited Hulavig in 1846 and drew the site before its peat had been cleared, showing the stones to be surrounding a small barrow of thousands of years of peat growth. Ironically, the removal of the convex mound eleven years after Worsaae's visit soon created a convex trough in the circle centre, which has been shown by Tomkin's drawing of 1885 to have been a damp quagmire even then. But that is a small price to pay for the splendour of Ceann Hulavig restored.

NOTES FROM CEANN HULAVIG STONE CIRCLE, LEWIS: SUNSET, 29TH JUNE 1992 CE

Far across the loch, the sun is setting, hanging behind a black cloud blazing and waiting to descend. The five stones of this circle are lonely high on this hillside, the most out of the way of all the Callanish satellites. Whoa, now the sun is descending, visibly inching its way from behind the cloud and presenting itself centre stage. Last year, Ceann Hulavig was so wet that it was impossible to stand in the circle – each stone was drenched in this boggy mire. But now, I'm sitting on the main stone of the burial kist in the centre and none of me is wet. On all sides, the black mountains of Lewis stand distant but ever present. This is a grand stone circle and to the south-west are two standing stones high on the top of distant hills. In the near distance, the peat-cutters are piling their peat up to dry whilst new lambs wait for their mothers. The five lichen-covered stones of Ceann Hulavig are intoxicating. To return to this place makes me feel blessed.

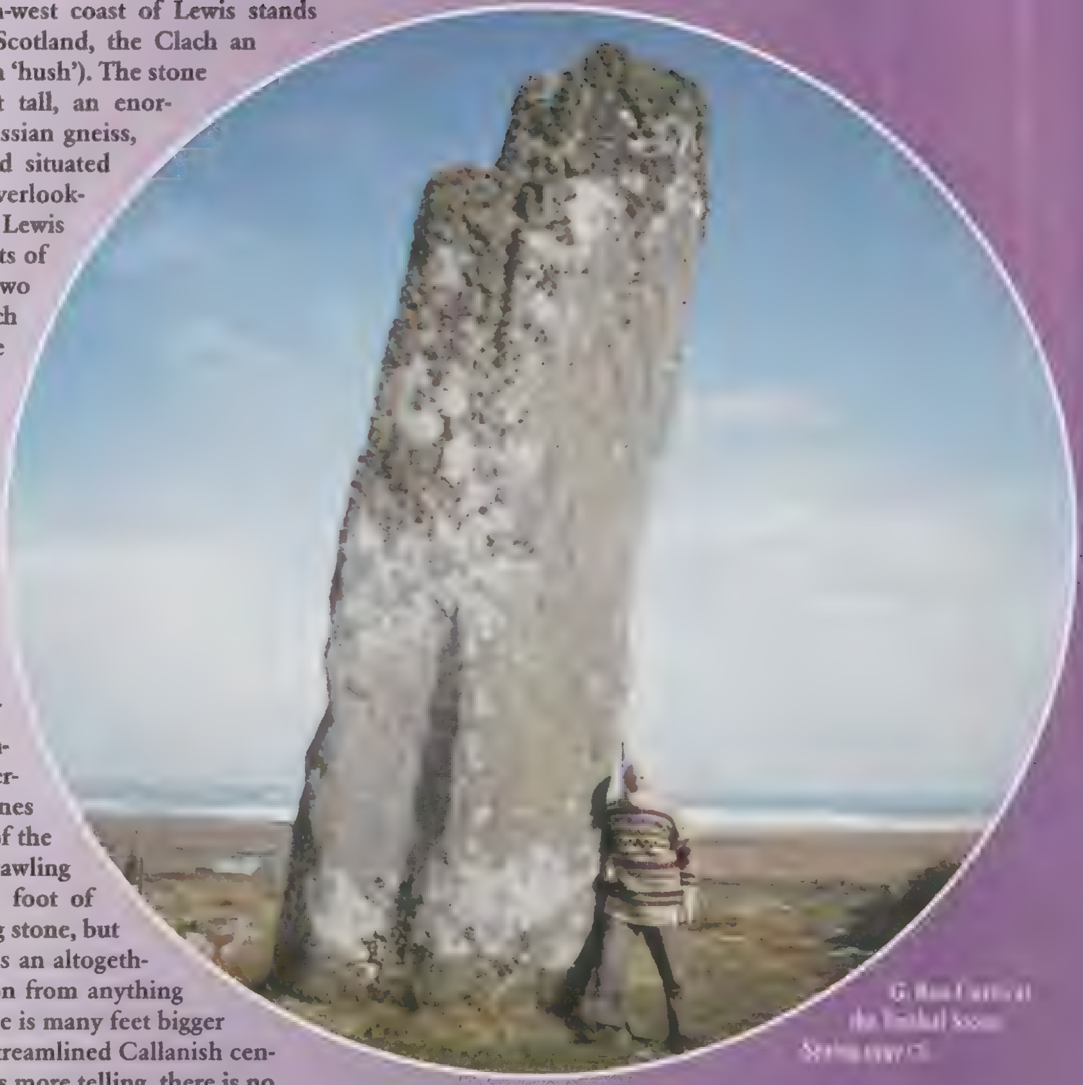
At Gharraidh na-hine/Garynahine on the A858, between Callanish Stones and Achmor, take the B8011 south-west towards Uig for just over a mile. Soon the Hulavig stones rear up about 300 yards away, raised up on the near horizon to the right.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
8.376538

7 b) 4

Clach an Trushal

High upon the north-west coast of Lewis stands the largest stone in Scotland, the Clach an Trushal (to rhyme with 'hush'). The stone is almost twenty feet tall, an enormous phallus of Lewissian gneiss, hoary with lichen and situated in a stone alleyway overlooking the wild north Lewis beaches in the outskirts of Ballantrushal. In the two drystone walls which pass either side of the stone, there appear to be the remains of rooted stones, possibly broken off at those roots during the making of the field walls. G. Ron Curtis has suggested that a former stone circle may have encircled the Clach an Trushal, in an echo of the rudimentary Callanish^{G} circle. There are certainly suspicious stones lurking at both sides of the stone dykes, and sprawling stones even litter the foot of the enormous standing stone, but the Clach an Trushal is an altogether different proposition from anything at Callanish. This stone is many feet bigger and bulkier than the streamlined Callanish centre stone. And, perhaps more telling, there is no horizon marker at all, for the horizon is the sea.



G. Ron Curtis at the Trushal Stone. Spring [illegible]

NOTES FROM THE FOOT OF THE CLACH AN TRUSHAL, BALLANTRUSHAL, NEAR LEWIS COAST: MID-AFTERNOON, 30TH JUNE 1992 CE

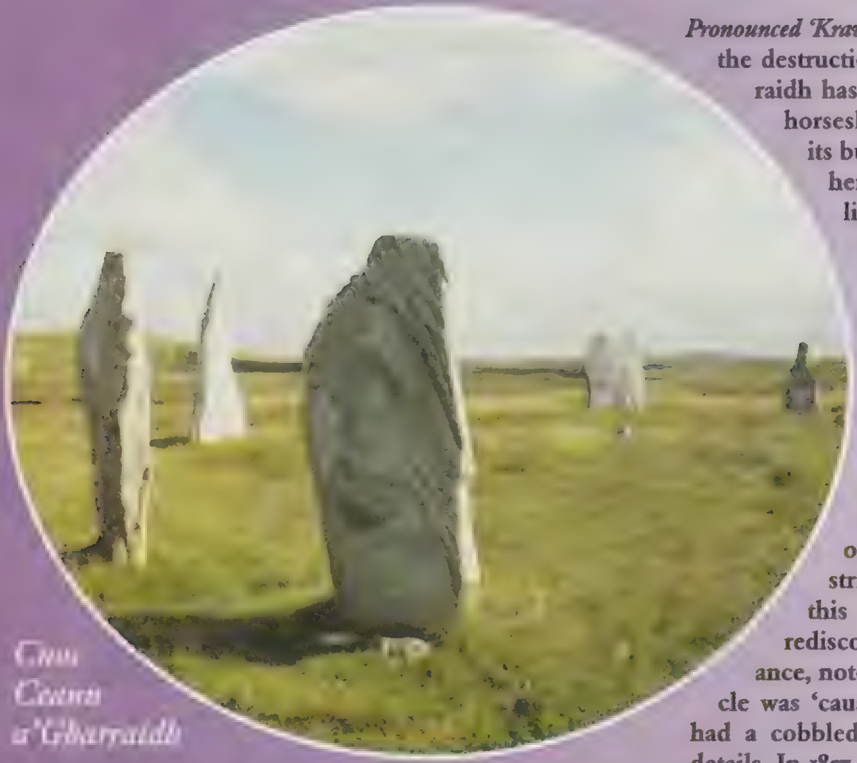
In high wind, I sit with my back against the towering monolith, the Clach an Trushal. The stone overlooks the stormy blue seas of this wild north coast and though there are houses dotted here and there, we are in remotest parts. The long shore drive to the stone is frustrating, the sea views being constantly spoiled by the inland routing of the road. But we saw this enormous monolith from the other side of the village. Now the wind is blowing wildly around both sides of the stone and there is no escape from it. If I rest my head back on the stone and look up to the sky, the Clach an Trushal looms over me, bearded and fuzzy-faced, that same pale green lichen covering the top of the stone. Placed in a pathway and with low walls on either side, the stone is a cold place to hang out. Instead it is more of a place for wonder – that this stone remains and that others were perhaps once here. On my left, to the east, storm clouds are brewing whilst the sea view is blue and charming. But this day is a windy one and now I must leave.

Travel up the north-west coast of Lewis to Ballantrushal. Take the only left turn in the village. Continue less than a half mile and take the only feasible next left, amidst lorry repairs. Continue only yards and the Clach an Trushal is hugely visible to your left.

7 b) 5

ORDNANCE SURVEY
8.222326

Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh



Cnoc
Ceann
a'Gharraidh

Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh
The stone I want to marry
[illegible]
[illegible]

Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh
No breath – without a sound
Ancient calculations [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible] Callanish [illegible]
[illegible]

Pronounced 'Krawk Kee-ann A-garry'. Overlooking Loch Roag, the destruction at the west side of Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh has rendered this spectacular site a megalithic horseshoe rather than the fine tall stone circle that its builders intended. But these druid-like stones here at the lochside are sheer giant beauties, lightly hewn slabs of crystalline vastness. The tallest stone is almost eleven feet high, even the shortest is well over six feet, and, in their semi-circular destruction, each one of the remaining stones conspires to address the waters of the loch. The circle has a confused written history and even highly regarded writers all seem to differ in their opinions and facts about Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh. Jakob Worsaae visited the stones in 1846 before the peat clearance of 1858. Around three feet seems to have been stripped away from the site in all, and it was at this time that prone and buried stones were rediscovered. Ellice, the recorder of the peat clearance, noted that the whole of the area within the circle was 'causewayed', which may mean that the circle had a cobbled interior. But his report lacked any real details. In 1857, an outlying stone was temporarily discovered by Palmer the antiquary, but that it was soon lost just shows the state of flux in which prehistory found itself. One of the stones was claimed by the writer John Stuart to have had carvings of Ogham (pronounced 'O'Werm'), and the owner of the island, Sir James Matheson, tore the stone out of the ground and carted it off to Stornaway for protection. This 'protection' involved setting the stone up in front of Sir James Matheson's front gate as an interesting talking point. In 1919, when the estate had changed hands, the great stone was thrown down and partly used for building material. Its remains now rest dumped opposite Creed Lodge in Stornoway.

NOTES SITTING ON A RECUMBENT STONE AT CNOC CEANN A'GHARRAIDH STONE CIRCLE: 2ND JULY 1992 CE, 8.45 A.M.

In warm driving wind I sit, the morning sun hanging over the same point of the centre stone of this horseshoe-shaped monument overlooking Loch Hulavig. Here is the most strange of all the Callanish^{G} monuments: from the road, it looks unprepossessing – not placed all the way at the end of the ridge, and access to it only by way of a road through real shantyville. Old cars, wire fences and the remains of black houses litter this place. But on arrival, the stones are magnificent. Only five remain upright, two large Recumbents are almost buried, with the inevitable spoiled burial cairn in the centre. Yet each stone has such extreme character and the monument such a unique quality that there is a sense of comfort here. The circle is on a low ledge and the Sleeping Beauty in the hills is perfectly placed from this site. The whole sky is filled with a light fuzzy cloud covering, giving a mottled effect and turning the sun into a milky orb high overhead. Ahead of me 300 yards is the concentric circle of Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag,^{G} whilst over the promontory one mile is the Callanish cross. The water scurries across the loch and a gust of wind across this valley is sending the sheep scattering. Today we leave Lewis with a heavy heart.

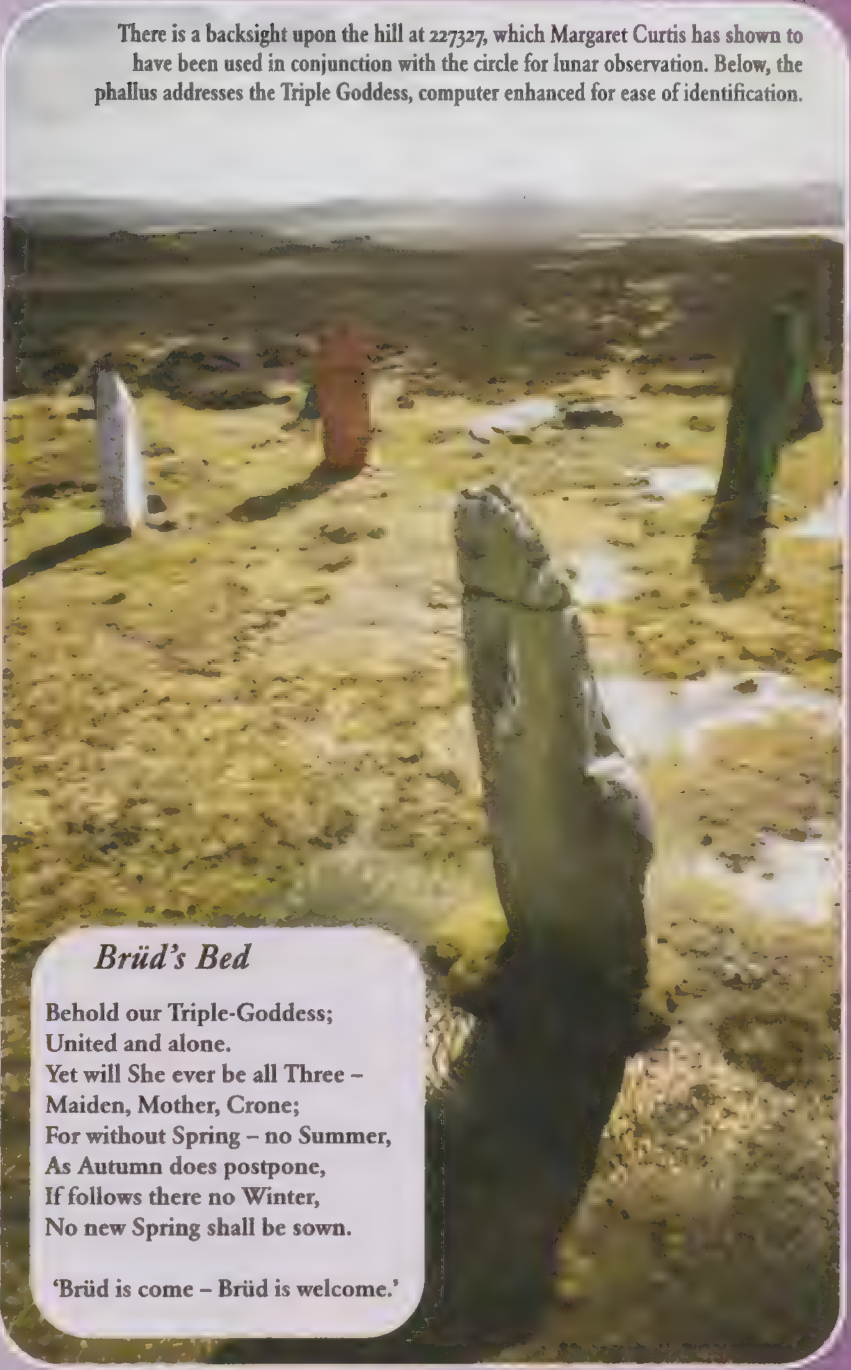
Copy the drive to Callanish, but look out on your left on entering the village, as you pass the 'Calanais' sign. Take the immediate next left and park beyond the modern settlement, by the twisted wire fences. The stones are directly ahead, lochside.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
8.213330

Cnoc Fillibhear Bheag

Pronounced 'Krawk Filly-ver Vegg'. On a solid platform of land behind the stone circle of Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh[G] and Loch Roag, this mighty ring of stones is orientated directly at the recumbent figure of Sleeping Beauty created by the distant hills at the south-west. The specific orientation of this circle is cleverly created by the building of a Triple Goddess setting addressed by a large seven-foot phallus of dark stone, which salutes the Goddess in her three phases from left to right – the Maiden is the small white stone, the Mother is the full top-heavy red stone, the Hag or Wise Crone is the taller dark stone on the right. At Fillibhear Bheag, every stone is a gem, and even the fallen stones rise enigmatically out of the peat, as though showing a glimpse of shoulder as a tease. The stones were cleared of peat in 1858, at which time they were shown to be large stones in a circle with a thirteen-pace diameter. The tallest is over seven feet, but most of them are around five feet in height.

There is a backsight upon the hill at 227327, which Margaret Curtis has shown to have been used in conjunction with the circle for lunar observation. Below, the phallus addresses the Triple Goddess, computer enhanced for ease of identification.



Brüd's Bed

Behold our Triple-Goddess;
United and alone.
Yet will She ever be all Three –
Maiden, Mother, Crone;
For without Spring – no Summer,
As Autumn does postpone,
If follows there no Winter,
No new Spring shall be sown.

'Brüd is come – Brüd is welcome.'

NOTES FROM CNOC FILLIBHEAR BHEAG: MORNING OF 28TH JUNE 1992 CE

I'm sitting with my back resting against one of the inside stones of this double concentric circle, the sun behind me and Loch Roag set out before me. One mile away on the low horizon, the stones of Callanish[G] beckon me to my right whilst the horseshoe setting of Cnoc Ceann a'Gharraidh … [is] directly in front about 250 yards. I have been lying in this circle for some time, waves of warmth dashing me and the beauty of this satellite site insisting that I stay longer. As I climbed the rise, a hawk circled me at about thirty feet, shrieking and beating its wings repeatedly. Perhaps I was close to her nest. Now, a wind has developed, but I am at peace in this circle. On all sides, the far distant black mysterious mountains of this strange island peer though each other and birds twitter constantly – the seagulls caterwauling and the sheep sneaking a look at me from behind the stone. These uprights are made of Lewissian gneiss – a fabulous seamed and easily shaped rock. All the Lewis monuments are made from this stuff – there is hornblende and other crystals in the make-up of the rock and its ability to be hewn so narrow gives each megalith an outstanding personal character. The size is never important to these circles, but the builders of Callanish and its satellites were the supreme ancient psychologists. They have placed these three monuments with a supreme sense of dignity and each prepares you for the next. Now, I shall leave and have breakfast.

Copy the drive to Callanish, but look out to the raised plateau on your left, just before you pass the 'Calanais' sign. The stones are reachable via a modern access path.

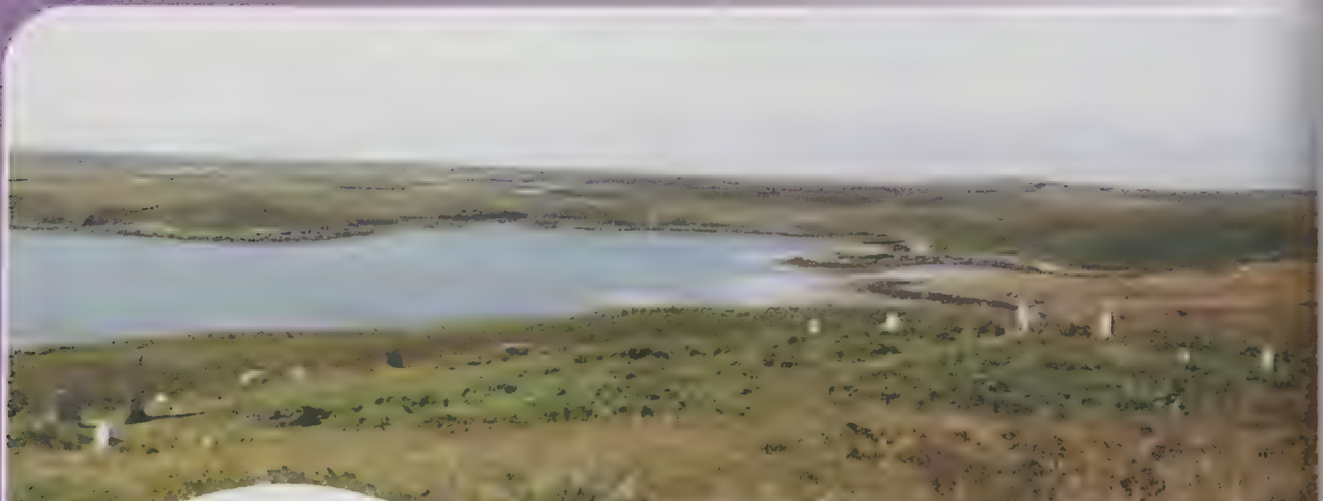
7 b) 7

ORDNANCE SURVEY
18.843651

Pobuill Fhinn

Pronounced 'Pobble fin'. The magnificent low stone circle of Pobuill Fhinn clings to a wide levelled platform on the south side of the magical Ben Langass, just three-quarters of a mile from the glitter of Barpa Langass.[G] It is a marvellously quiet situation reached by travelling almost a mile off a deserted track off the remote A867. Below the stone circle is the long narrow glassy pool of Loch Langass, whilst four long miles of watery wastes away to the south-west stands the sacred hill forbiddingly known as Eaval, 'up whose left hand slope the sun rolled on Mayday morning', according to G. Ron Curtis in *Records of Stone.* Eaval is a stupendous massif with cairns at its head and caves at its feet. Pobuill Fhinn means 'Finn's People', named after the legendary Finn MacCoul, and has in North Uist taken on a secondary interpretation as the 'white people' or 'holy people'. The stones of this wide circle are all of different sizes. In the rough turf and high vegetation, many of them are lost, being no more than the height of the grass, whilst others stand up to six-and-a-half feet tall, but the rare beauty of this stone circle is the chance to appreciate yet another monument fashioned from this magical Lewissian gneiss. The site was first levelled by cutting into the hillside, the earth extracted, then used to build up an outward bank. Once the platform was firm, two portalled entrances were made along the long axis of the circle. At the west, an entrance three paces wide was signified by two stones, the largest of which has now fallen. At the east-south-east, a fifteen-pace entrance was denoted by the erection of two stones four feet and six-and-a-half feet tall, whilst further low portal stones were erected outside these uprights. G. Ronald Curtis has noted that the eyes of an observer standing at the centre of the circle would have been guided towards distant Leacach an Tigh Cloiche, the megalithic site on Uneval.[G]

NB Travellers who become intoxicated with this circle may also wish to do a little field-walking and visit Loch a'Phobuill at 18.828631, where the stones are embedded in deep peat growth. Though there is little to see in terms of stones, the march of the peat is explained in no uncertain terms. Gulleys and cuttings at this site still provide spectacular examples of once tall standing stones now swallowed up to their necks.



NOTES IN BLASTED SUNLIGHT FROM POBUILL FHINN, NORTH UIST: 13TH AUGUST 1994 CE

I'm beyond bliss at this place. The great circle is so peaceful and so sunny right now, it's a job to write any notes at all. The huge sacred mountain to the south-east is called Eaval, a massif of black rock with cairns on its slopes and a cave on the south-east face. I climbed to the top of Ben Langass early this morning in order to understand the relationships of the landscapes. On such an island as North Uist, every great hill will be significant to the population… The circle itself is not impressive in the size of the stones, but the situation, on its great levelled platform, amidst the fern and the heather, is as perfect a site as any I know.
But we are lucky to see Uist in such light; very lucky indeed!

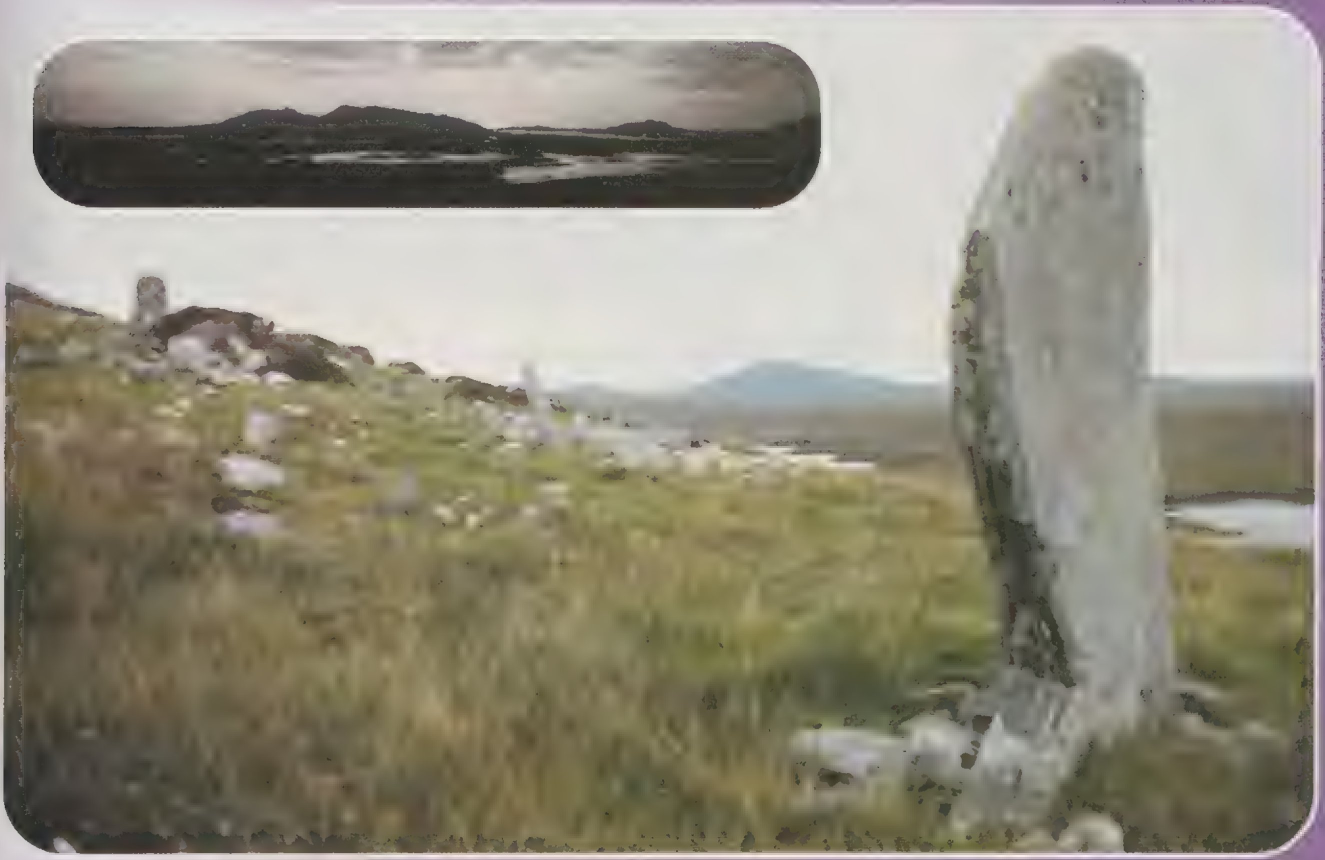
Pobuill Fhinn requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
18.811668

7 b) 8

Uneval

Also known as Leacach an Tigh Cloiche, the chambered cairn on the side of Uneval is a remote place across a remoter moorland. Travellers must give themselves time to enjoy this walk, rather than hurry to make it in time. The cairn material has long been taken from the site, leaving a series of large exposed megaliths and one very large standing stone. The remains of the antechamber, façade and chamber walls are still to be seen at Uneval, but the main attracton of the site is its platform of megalithic chaos in so remote a spot, with fantastically long views down to South Uist and Bheinn Mhor. The antiquary/archaeologist Sir Lindsay Scott investigated Uneval. He discovered a stone slab kist in the chamber containing the burnt bones of a female adult. Pottery was found in the kist, along with bones and more pottery on the chamber floors. Excavations in 1935 and 1939 discovered that an early Iron Age house had later been inserted into the cairn, including a special corn-drying room. This overlay has added to the considerable problems of understanding Uneval. The remaining two shots left in the Polaroid camera did not come out. I tried, but they appeared to be jammed. After several tries, I put down the camera and, one full minute later, the camera went off on its own. Then a shrieking sound signified the end of the film. Two shots became one, and neither of them came out. As I was two miles from the nearest B-road and it was still barely after sunrise, I decided to do without the Polaroids.

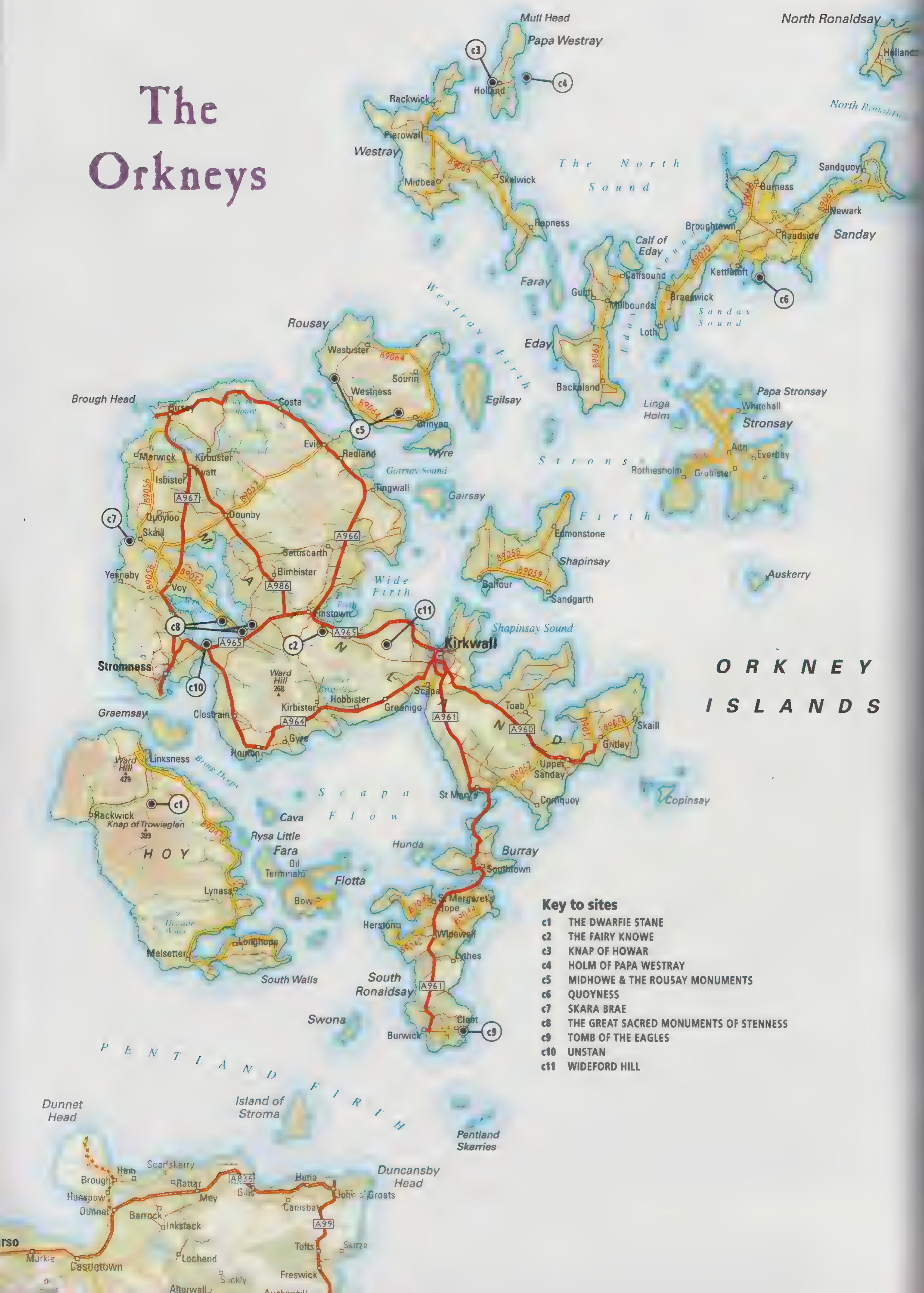


NOTES AT THE CHAMBER OF UNEVAL, NORTH UIST: 14TH AUGUST, 7.40 A.M., 1994 CE

It's perfectly silent here except for one lone bleating lamb way down west near the sea. Now, I'm sitting in the remains of the chamber, which is open to the sky but still huge in its construction. Such is the chaos up here at the site that Mr Quarm, whom we're staying with, thought the stones to be a circle. Certainly there are enough orthostats left to give that impression, what with the cairn being virtually destroyed. But best of all is the huge south-facing standing stone – a huge wide skinny piece of Lewissian gneiss about ten feet tall. The stone reminds me of the Barnhouse stone on Orkney. I'm beset by flies as I write and this wonderful place is not easy to get to. The road soon disappears and it's a problem not to fall into the burn. But, once again, the great tomb is on a southern shelf looking down to the great Hecla figure, as are all the Uist sites. The sea is about a mile to the west, dark and cloudy, whilst the east is a magical feast of light. But now I shall leave; the flies are too much!

Uneval requires an O.S. map.

The Orkneys


Mull Head
Papa Westray
North Ronaldsay
Hollandstoun
North Ronaldsay
Holland
Rackwick
Pierowall
Westray
Midbea
Skelwick
B9066
The North Sound
Rapness
Burness
Sandquoy
Newark
Sanday
Broughtown
Roadside
B9069
B9068
B9070
Calf of Eday
Calfsound
Kettletoft
Faray
Guith
Braeswick
Millbounds
Sanday Sound
Eday Sound
Loth
Eday
B9063
Backaland
Westray Firth
Rousay
Wasbister
B9064
Sourin
Westness
Brinyan
Egilsay
Brough Head
Birsay
Costa
Evie
Redland
Wyre
Gairsay Sound
Marwick
Kirbuster
Twatt
Isbister
B9056
A967
B9057
Dounby
Quoyloo
Skaill
Tingwall
Gairsay
Linga Holm
Papa Stronsay
Whitehall
Stronsay
Aith
Everbay
Rothiesholm
Grobister
Stronsay Firth
Edmonstone
Shapinsay
B9058
B9059
Balfour
Sandgarth
Auskerry
A966
Settiscarth
Bimbister
A986
Yesnaby
B9055
Voy
Finstown
Wide Firth
A965
Stromness
Kirkwall
Shapinsay Sound
Ward Hill 268
Kirbister
Hobbister
Scapa
Greenigo
Graemsay
Clestrain
A964
Gyre
Houton
A961
Toab
A960
B9051
B9050
Skaill
Gritley
Upper Sanday
B9052
Comquoy
Copinsay
ORKNEY ISLANDS
MAINLAND
Ward Hill 479
Linksness
Burra Deep?
Rackwick
Knap of Trowieglen 399
HOY
B9047
Scapa Flow
St Mary's
Cava
Rysa Little
Fara
Oil Terminal
Hunda
Burray
Southtown
Flotta
Lyness
Bow
St Margaret's Hope
B9043
B9044
Herston
Widewall
B9042
Sythes
Melsetter
Longhope
South Walls
South Ronaldsay
A961
Swona
Burwick
Cleat
PENTLAND FIRTH
Dunnet Head
Island of Stroma
Pentland Skerries
Duncansby Head
Scarfskerry
Ham
Brough
Rattar
A836
Huna
Gills
John o' Groats
Mey
Canisbay
Dunnet
Barrock
Inkstack
A99
Thurso
Murkie
Castletown
Lochend
Tofts
Skirza
Sickly
Freswick
Alterwall
Auckengill
c1
c2
c3
c4
c5
c6
c7
c8
c9
c10
c11

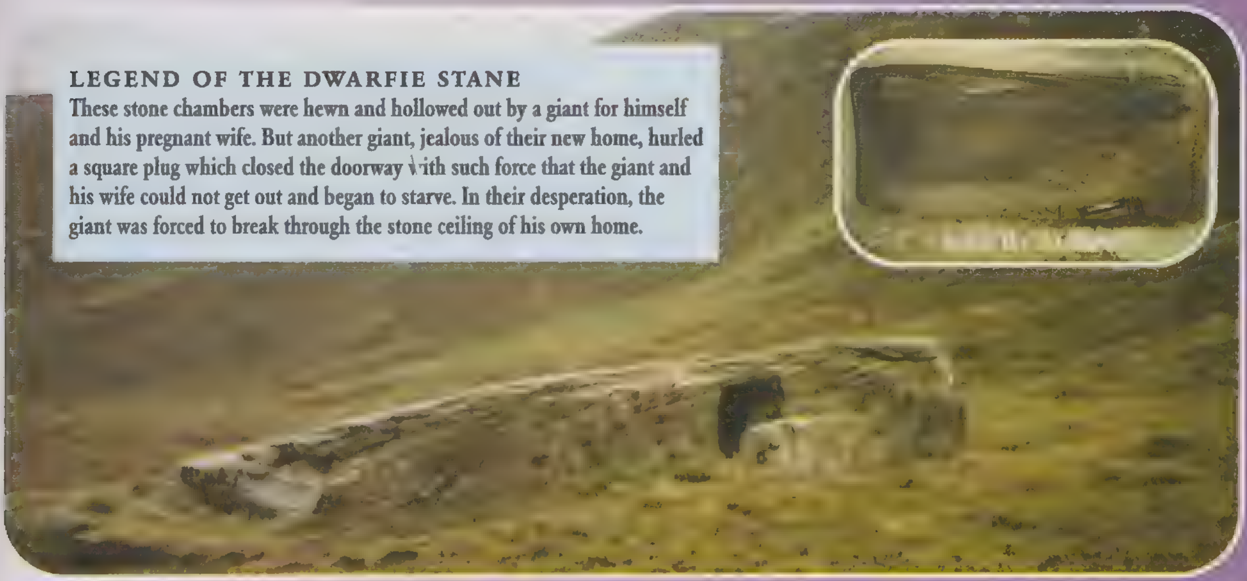
Key to sites

c1	THE DWARFIE STANE
c2	THE FAIRY KNOWE
c3	KNAP OF HOWAR
c4	HOLM OF PAPA WESTRAY
c5	MIDHOWE & THE ROUSAY MONUMENTS
c6	QUOYNESS
c7	SKARA BRAE
c8	THE GREAT SACRED MONUMENTS OF STENNESS
c9	TOMB OF THE EAGLES
c10	UNSTAN
c11	WIDEFORD HILL

The Dwarfie Stane

The trek to the Dwarfie Stane is the very loneliest of all, for the traveller must first pass the grave of Betty Corrigal, a young girl who committed suicide when her sailor boyfriend left the island of Hoy, and so was buried in unconsecrated ground outside the parish, on the loneliest hillside in Britain. In this simple story we see the problem with the Christian Church: the land outside the parish is not holy. To the Pagan peoples all land was holy. Passing the sad picket fence around young Betty's grave, the journey continues to the side of a stupendous glen, where the Dwarfie Stane lies in residence in the lea of the looming Dwarfie Hamars. The Dwarfie Stane is a huge piece of sandstone which fell from the heights of the Hamars above, and the allusion to the Goddess continues in the name of the Trowie Glen, or 'Valley of the Trow', or Hag, 800 yards to the south-west. Sometime, probably in the Neolithic, the Dwarfie Stane was hollowed out into two separate chambers using the finest pecking techniques to give a sensational effect within the main chamber. For it has a lip all around, and much love and considerable expertise have been put into the construction of this 'tomb'. A marvellously fitted 'blocking stone' once plugged the entrance snugly, and the hole in the roof of the Stane appears to have been caused by those who first gained entrance – the blocking stone was then moved from within and currently lies in front of the doorway. There are rock-cut tombs all over Europe, but the Greek examples are ignored and the Portuguese examples, though splendid, are awash with defecation. In Britain, there is only the Dwarfie Stane and St. Kevin's Bed in Ireland.

The Dwarfie Stane had an important part in Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate*, in which the stone is the favourite home of Trolld, a dwarf from the northern sagas. In 1850, the pull of the Dwarfie Stane caused the freaked-out British spy Guilemus Mounsey to use the Stane as a temporary home whilst his traumatised brain had a Lawrence of Arabia-scale breakdown. On the south side of the Dwarfie Stane, the troubled Mounsey carved his name, along with the date and these thoughts: 'Oh God, I am pierced to the heart, and very sorrowful, I wake all night and study and learn patience.' Such are the joys of the Dwarfie Stane.



LEGEND OF THE DWARFIE STANE

These stone chambers were hewn and hollowed out by a giant for himself and his pregnant wife. But another giant, jealous of their new home, hurled a square plug which closed the doorway with such force that the giant and his wife could not get out and began to starve. In their desperation, the giant was forced to break through the stone ceiling of his own home.

NOTES FROM THE BED OF THE DWARFIE STANE, HOY, THE ORKNEYS: 13TH JULY 1992 CE

Driving rain blasts the entrance of this crazy rock-cut tomb high up on the devastated Hoy hillside, a curtain of battle-cruiser grey cloud hanging above me and across the desolate valley below. This is the place where Guilemus Mounsey went mad, the place where the troll lived in Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate* and the loneliest place a man could sleep. Up here on the mountainside, I'm lying on my back sopping wet, but drier than one hour ago. The chamber is beautifully worked but only about thirty inches high. There was a door in ancient times but that blocking stone is now unplugged and lies at the entrance to the tomb. This wind-blasted hillside is extra-special, for this place is a wild sanctuary. A wild sanctuary and a righteous hang-out. On a clear day, this place would inspire crazy sexual activity, but today I'm content to be hidden from the mad extremes of the weather outside. *Addendum*: Far ooot! I ventured out into the rain for a desperate pee. Behind the back of the stone at the hillside, I saw carved in mirror writing Guilemus Mounsey's Persian poem. I shall try to photograph it later...

The Dwarfie Stane requires an O.S. map.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
6.364127

The Fairy Knowe

Visible for miles to travellers who know her high position on the side of Cuween Hill, the Fairy Knowe is the most delicate Neolithic mound of all. This massive five-chambered cairn is disguised by the most pre-pubescent of feminine mounds, but within are secrets of megalithic mystery. Travellers gain entrance through a long low opening passageway about eighteen feet long. This gives way to the tall central reception chamber to which four separate chambers are connected. One of the chambers has an annexe, created by a partial megalithic partition, more easily achieved with the wafer-like Orcadian flagstone. Because of the ideal building material, the chambers all bear the same perfect masonry so unlike standard megalithic culture and so reminiscent of Classical Greek Bronze Age tombs. The Fairy Knowe was excavated in 1901 by M. M. Charleson, after the first simple explorations were made in 1888 by simply lifting up the huge capstones. Charleson dug a trench across the top of the mound and dug until he saw the outline of the chambers peering through the cairn material. On the floor of the main chamber, he discovered five human skulls and longbones. It was clear that all of the structure was built directly onto the bedrock. The side-cells, which looked like megalithic shelves inset into the walls, held two more skulls, whilst twenty-four dog skulls had also been placed on the floor. Animal bone was discovered here, too, when Charleson removed 'slabs of various sizes, earth and animal remains, among which the teeth of the dog were most conspicuous'. Here at the Fairy Knowe, so many references have been made to this cairn's association with dogs that local archaeologists nicknamed the site 'Tomb of the Beagles'.

NOTES INSIDE THE FAIRY KNOWE'S SMALLEST CHAMBER, CUWEEN HILL, ORKNEY: 20TH AUGUST 1993 CE

It's rush hour right now. I'm in the smallest chamber [where] I saw the strange amber apparition last year. Again, notice has been taken of this chamber, a large offering of flowers having been left at the stepped entrance to it. After about twenty minutes of lying in a foetal position, something fell onto me from the roof, a stone probably, not big but quite unlikely, I thought. The Fairy Knowe is always damp – it rained all night last night so perhaps I am generalising, but I've been here a few times now in dry weather and there's always dampness right through the chambers. The tomb is silent once more as I sit pert and upright huddled around the torch supplied and shivery in a tripped out kind of way. I believe that the young shaman would have colluded with the ancestors in these places. This chamber is the 'live' one and [has] a special character of its own. I've no idea if the stone falling on my chest was an accident, but this chamber does scream out for further 'psychic' investigation. Orkney has not, unfortunately, presented us with Margaret-types. That said, I'm sure they must be out there somewhere.

Take the A965 through Finstown, heading in the Kirkwall direction. As you leave the town's end, take the uphill right turn opposite the pier entrance (a house with an upside-down boat-hull is your landmark). The cairn is signposted 'Cuween Hill' just yards along this local road, on your right.

Holm of Papa Westray

The approach to this strangely shaped cairn across the azure blue straits of South Wick alerts travellers to just how far away from regular Britain they are. On its excavation, this magnificent long cairn was housed in a submarine-like green turfed casing, which the traveller descends into via a ladder through a roof-hatch. Inside, fourteen chambers are arranged along the walls, some of them sharing low scramble entrances, akin to the entrances of creeps in Cornish fogous. No human remains were discovered inside the chambers, but carvings such as eyebrow motifs and zig-zags were found, similar to those in Irish monuments. This long chambered cairn is a formidable construction. One very stupid antiquary, Captain Thomas, who excavated this structure, called it 'the temporary habitations of a nomade people'. Five thousand years later, this immovable structure still stands as firm as the rock beneath it.

EARLY MORNING NOTES FROM FRIEDLAND, KIRKWALL, POMONA: 7.10 A.M., 15TH JULY 1992 CE

This beautiful morning dragged me awake at 6 a.m., the sun blasting me with its blue sky banner gathered all around it. I am so tired but today [we] go to Papa Westray and it's a long haul… Now, we take a taxi to the Kirkwall ferry to Westray, from there a connection to Papa Westray, and from there Mr Davidson will take us to the Holm of Papa Westray in his boat. Each island gets smaller and smaller. It is a five-hour journey and I'm excited in an already knackered but anticipational way…

NOTES FROM THE MAIN CHAMBER ON THE HOLM OF PAPA WESTRAY, ORKNEY: 15TH JULY 1992 CE

What a fantastic place. This is the largest tomb I have seen – fourteen chambers lead off this main one and at each end are even larger chambers. The atmosphere is unfortunately hard to grasp as two people are lying here and have their stuff around the place. But really, who cares? The tomb is sunlit and extremely roomy; the poor guys who are working on the island decided to stay here and have had four straight days of rain… *Ten minutes later:* What a hectic place this is. I'm charging from one end of the cairn chamber to another, being shown cup- and ring-marks and the strange zig-zag formation on the opposite wall. The marks are made with a pointed tool and the light from the roof light makes this place incredible. How I wish we had more time. But – the journey has been as fine as the times here and I am quite satisfied. *Notes from the* Golden Mariana *ferryboat, Westray to Pomona, evening*: As we return to Kirkwall aboard this chugboat, I feel exhilarated, exhausted and once more smitten with the world. We left Papay around 5 p.m. on the little boat we went there on. Thence, we were dropped off at a hotel for tea and toasties, then a shuttle bus (forty-five mins.) to the south of the island where we were astounded to see the *Golden Mariana* docking against a rough jetty of rocks. The islands all seem to be having their piers fixed(!) and now we are aboard a tiny boat with a rail all around and one tiny smoky cabin. These past two hours I have been outside braving the elements in a desire to get some real peace. And peace has been there for me. Outside, huddled up in my blues (Gortex) and breathing hard, all that clear sea air has brought me a little more to my senses…

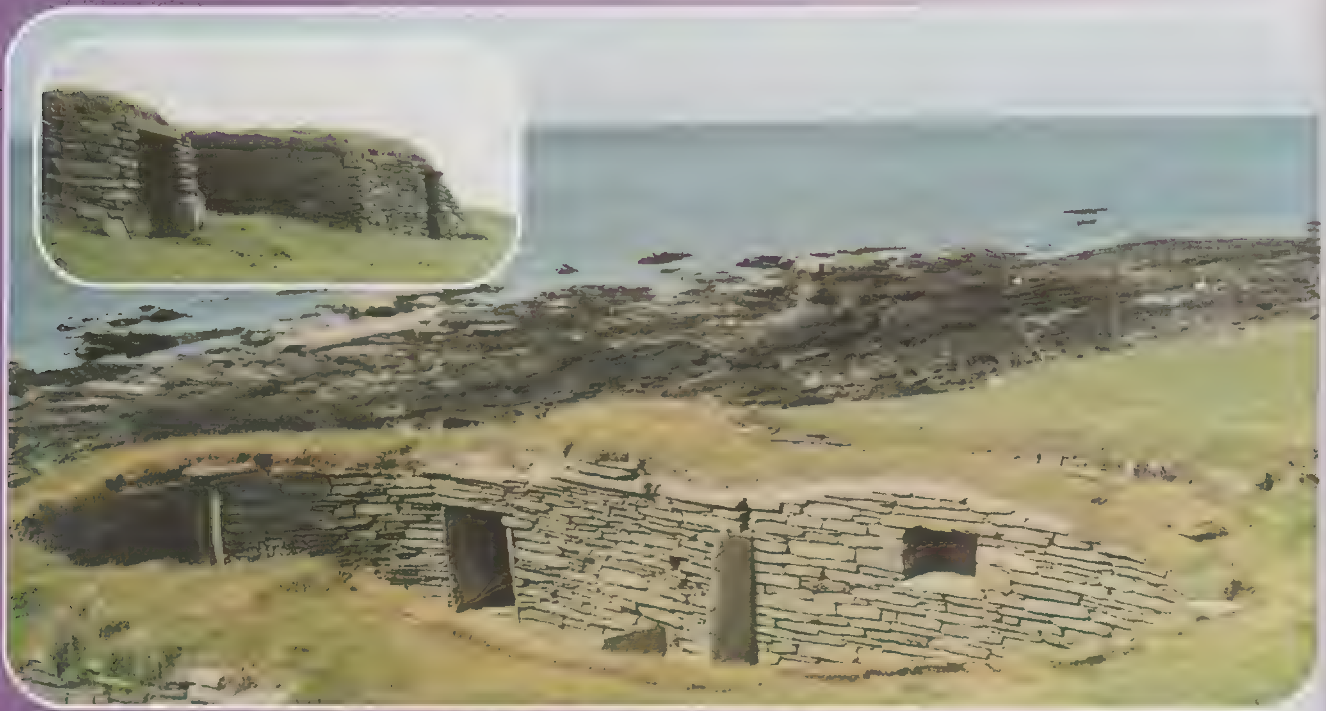
This visit needs organisation and a map. I was taken by ro-ro ferry, cabin cruiser and finally motorboat during summer 1992 CE, and Tuesdays and Thursdays were out. Phone the collective on Papa Westray – they are helpful and will inform you of the latest procedure, or phone Tourist Information in Kirkwall.

7 c) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
5.483518

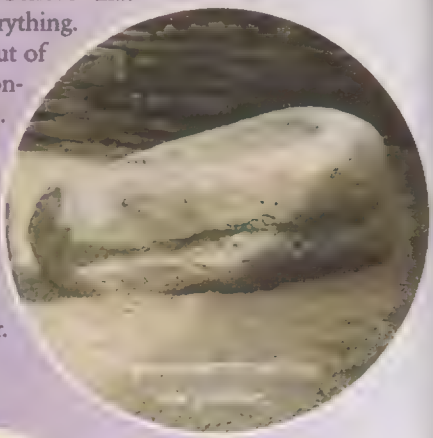
Knap of Howar

Standing on the beautiful Papa Sound, looking out to the Bay of Skaill and the Holm of Aikerness on Westray, the Neolithic settlement called Knap of Howar (*see Chapter 4 for Hawah*) hangs in time. Its megalithic dressers, quernstones, room-partitions and shelving are just the same as they were 5,000 years ago. Knap of Howar was built as two large rooms alongside each other on top of a kitchen midden, a pile of household rubbish made up mainly of seashells. Using this base, the Neolithic builders constructed two rectangular rooms linked by a passageway. The stone supports in the middle of the rooms would probably have been for wooden table-tops, and pottery similar to that found on the mainland at Unstan[G] was discovered here. In 1992 CE, I discovered a nine-inch long double-ended megalithic dildo on the beach about thirty yards below Knap of Howar. The artefact is made of dark Orcadian flagstone, fashioned at either end into the stylised rendition of a phallus.



NOTES FROM KNAP OF HOWAR, PAPA WESTRAY, ORKNEY: 15TH JULY 1992 CE

It's hard to write. Today is such a blissful time that I just want to sink down into the grass and sleep. This is the oldest settlement in Britain, overlooking the stretch called the Papa Sound. Right at the top of the west of the island … [is a Neolithic house] with two rooms. Both rooms are walled then turfed over with seaward entrances for either room and [a] passageway between the two. The main living room has two large stone placements for large timber post holes. Quartz stones sit in either room but the smaller room seems to be better equipped, probably as a kitchen with a megalithic storage unit in the walls and the kerbed kist-like central unit likely to be for a fire. This place is so ancient and so solitary that it is a marvellous feeling to be here… *Continued at the water's edge:* We have travelled far to the Knap of Howar, travelling from northern Scotland by ferry to Orkney Mainland and from there by ferry to Westray Island, transferring to an open cabin cruiser with ten other passengers across to Papay, the pet name of Papa Westray. I believe that the pilgrimage is everything. Did we need to get out of the car to see the monument? Yes, we did. Now it is time for us to start the long trip back to Orkney Mainland. I had anticipated this day for many months. And now it is over. I shall return.



This visit needs organisation and a map – see Holm of Papa Westray.[G]

ORDNANCE SURVEY
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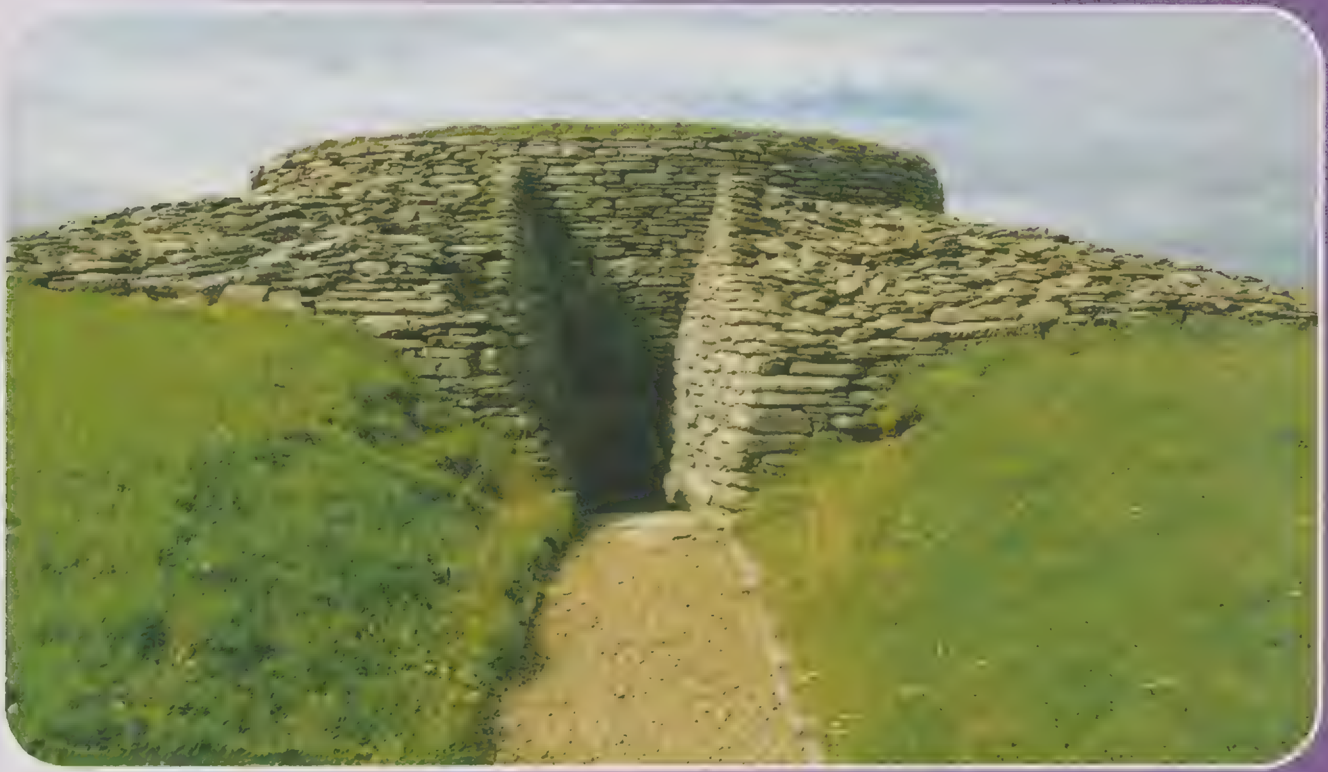
7 c) 6

Quoyness

On the southern peninsula of Elsness, on the remote Orcadian island of Sanday, stand a great cluster of Neolithic cairns. Most of them have been spoiled through the sheer weight of the many millennia of storms and winds on this treacherous and exposed place. But the most famous of all of them, that known as Quoyness, was excavated and restored by V. Gordon Childe in 1952, in a remarkable if confused Neolithic vision which has rendered this chambered cairn outwardly like some great cross between the Tomb of Agamemnon and the Dun Carloway broch on the Isle of Lewis. The confusion began with James Farrer and George Petrie, who both thought the site was a broch, or Iron Age fortified house, when Farrer excavated it in 1867. By 1932, the cairn of stones had been almost entirely used up for a new local road, and by infalls of cairn material caused by the cavalier attitude with which the 19th-century excavators had left the site. Nevertheless, Childe's epic outward reconstruction did not tamper within, so the six chambers may still be visited as they were intended to be seen. The entrances are a low slither into chambers of incredible masonry built directly onto the clay floor. As the walls rise higher, each successive layer overlaps slightly, allowing the walls to have virtually converged by the time they reach the roof. Discoveries here included a highly-polished bone pin, a polished slate hammerhead and a ground slate cylinder. It is worth visiting Augmundshowe, just 200 yards to the south, to see how badly monuments fare when excavated then left exposed to the elements. Antiquaries used to write of Augmundshowe as a fine monument.



NOTES AT THE SHORE OF QUOYNESS, SANDAY: 19TH AUGUST 1993 CE

This crazy place is fabulous. Unreal. Untruthful. But fabulous. Quoyness is a fantastic site in all senses. Restored in the '40s, the prehistorians of the time were still angling for a Mycenaean diffusion, with Stonehenge[G] the work of a Mycenaean prince and West Kennett longbarrow[G] a decadent form of the tomb of Agamemnon. And in Quoyness they got their Agamemnon tholos and entrance 'n' all. But this Mycenaean broch is much more than just that. For all of its restoration and whimsy, Quoyness is an incredible place. Also standing on this narrow beach of black flag is its beaten partner, Augmundshowe, 200 yards away, though depredations have reduced it to a mere tumulus. Behind it, the field walls pay tribute to the original size of the twenty-six cairns that dot this low green grass peninsula. Quoyness is a beautiful structure.

Now inside the tomb: I like this tomb a great deal… It's very large and has a spectacle about it. Also, its water position is superlative. Another Tomb of the Eagles,[G] or close. But it's a sure thing that such conjectural reconstruction does not help us go back to the Neolithic. As the cairn is not original, today starts a tradition which says, 'Add a stone from the beach when you visit.'

Quoyness requires an O.S. map.

Midhowe & the

Pronounced 'Row-zee', to rhyme with cow. The small island of Rousay, just north of the Orkney Mainland, rises dramatically into a great mass of hills at its centre, so that the homesteads of the island cluster around the shoreline, serviced by the B9064 road, which trails in a great ragged oval around the island in the passable flat ground between the the heights and the sea. On Rousay, there are chambered cairns all around the island, for this was once a very great Neolithic centre, and dedications to the Great Goddess still appear in names everywhere. Travellers in a hurry should turn left from the ferry and make their way straight to Taversoe Tuick, Blackhammer and the giant of Midhowe. But travellers with time to spare should take the steep right turn which takes them on a long circuit of this loaded prehistoric island. After about three-and-a-half miles, Faraclett Head comes into view, an area once awash with chambered cairns and ancient settlement. Unfortunately, the headland has continued to remain ideal for settlement and so agriculture has destroyed most of the evidence here. The Goddess Bree appears in the nearby crofts of Brendale, Breck and Broland, as well as the coastal rocks known as Muckle Brig. These names all occur in the two square miles which also take in the ruined chambered cairns of Kiefra Hill, Knowe of Craie, Bigland Long and Bigland Round, as well as the famous Neolithic settlement of Rinyo, which stood at 6.440323, but is now just a memory set within dramatic sculptured terraces. The north-west coast is entirely dedicated to Bree and, like the north-east coast of Hoy below Orkney Mainland, is dedicated to that Goddess in her spring form of Bring. There is a Bree hill called the Brae of Moan, a headland called Bring Head, and a natural land formation known as the Kilns of Brin-Novan. But best of all, the whole area is just called Brings.

From here, the traveller passes the barren cairns and burnt mound at the Sinians of Cutclaws to arrive on the south-coast at the fabulous chambers of Midhowe. This cairn was so big that it has had a 1930s engine shed built over it for protection. On the Midhowe beach stand the enormous and teetering defences of the Iron Age Midhowe broch, which is closer in time to us than it is to the great Midhowe cairn. Passing along the road south of Ward Hill, or Hill of Wer, we see the remains of the dilapidated Knowe of Rowiegar on the low shore before the final line of Rousay's prime chambered cairns flair up in front of us all in rapid succession – Knowe of Ramsay, Knowe of Lairo, Knowe of Yarso, Blackhammer and the twin tiers of Taversoe Tuick. These sites in a great southern arc from Midhowe to Taversoe Tuick are the easiest of all to visit. Unfortunately, the methods of their excavators, Callander & Grant, left everything to be desired. On a first visit to Rousay, I was so overcome with fury at their cairn-a-day spade and concrete methods that the whole trip was ruined. I returned the following year with a more open-minded approach, which quickly closed again as I revisited these superlative locations. But bearing all these thoughts in mind, the island of Rousay is a magical place and a megalithic mystery.

The Travesty of Taversoe Tuick

[illegible]
A concrete dome, a plexiglas roof.
We need no introduction,
The archaeologist's work is proof.
The cynical age of reason
Did dig into this ancient place,
Came looking for mementoes –
Barbarian burials we deface.
And yet below the sad despair,
As we descend the iron stair,
A world of true devotion surges through us,
And an ocean
Purges all that is above ground;
Take it down
Take it down
And let us see this place for real.
And without this grim and arcane
Archaeological zeal.
I am raging at the scientist aloof.
Do not trust the archaeologist,
Here's the proof.

(WRITTEN INSIDE THE LOWER CHAMBER, ROUSAY, THE ORKNEYS: 18TH JULY 1992 CE)

From the Midhowe shoreline, the quarried beach rises up like a stage.
The great Midhowe cairn is housed in the stone engine shed at left.

Take a ferry to Rousay and follow the signposts. The road circles the island – the traveller cannot get lost.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
6. SEE BELOW

Rousay Monuments

Midhowe

Before Callendar & Grant's excavation of 1934, Midhowe was an enormous turf-covered mound 100 by fifty feet, with a stone dyke built across its top. The entrance was at the south end through two large portal stones, but had been concealed with stone walling. The excavation removed the entire mound, which left the monument dry and exposed to the air, at which time the large engine shed was built over it. There are now great iron viewing pathways over the chambers and the stalls are remarkably intact. This is a classic site and whatever had to be done to ensure its survival somehow seems fair, what with the preponderance of other ruined cairns on the island. Eleven stalls separated the great chamber, some of them with stone benches. The remains of twenty-five people were discovered in various stages of disarticulation. Many of the bodies were virtually gone, and some of the twenty-five were only represented by fragments of their skulls. Bodies were placed in many different situations, but all the heads were left to face down the main passage. The bodies had been left to rot outside on mortuary platforms before being brought into the chamber itself. Finds included Unstan Ware, a knife of brown flint, and the bones of immature animals, including sheep, pigs, the antlers of ox, and bones of vole, red deer, buzzard, eagle, cormorant, skua, rock pigeon, gannet, carrion crow, gannet, shag, fish and limpets. NB Do not venture casually into the Midhowe broch. It has been unsafe for years and recent excavations of the wheelhouse centre have left it positively dangerous.

The Southshore Stone.

The chamber at Midhowe.

Blackhammer

This long cairn stands in the lea of the hill of Gurnadee, overlooking the destroyed broch of Varmady. It was taken into state guardianship in 1938, after Callander & Grant's excavations the year before, in which they took away the roof and most of the sides of the cairn, replacing them with another convenient concrete dome. But knowing the quality of work in advance, it is somehow easier to accept this when visiting the cairn, and time spent in the bright chambers is still great fun. Artefacts from Blackhammer included a damaged grey-green axe, flint scrapers and part of a bone pin. The nearby Knowe of Lairo and Knowe of Ramsay each conform to this standard of excavation.

Taversoe Tuick

The bizarre double-tiered construction of Taversoe Tuick is repeated only at the more battered Huntersquoy on the Isle of Eday. At both sites, two large chambers were built one on top of the other with no intention of linking them. At Taversoe Tuick, the high dramatic position of this magnificent cairn gives wide intoxicating views right across the whole Orcadian landscape; indeed, it was the decision of the landowners to cut a summer seat on the summit of the mound which led to the discovery of this chambered cairn in 1898. General Traill-Burroughs and his wife summoned their men to dig into the mound that summer, but by late afternoon, burial kists had been discovered close to the summit. Lady Burroughs concluded her diary for that day thus: 'I went to the Mound that afternoon carrying a basket full of spring flowers… On my homeward journey my basket contained a skull.' Excavation in 1903 proved difficult, and it was left to Callendar & Grant to shore up the mess and add as much concrete as they could. The top chamber was covered with a dome, complete with plexiglas roof, whilst the lower chamber was free from too many depredations. Less than ten yards from the mound itself, a smaller cairn chamber had been dug into the ground and divided by four slabs into narrow bays.

BLACKHAMMER: 6.414276
KNOWE OF LAIRO: 6.398279
KNOWE OF RAMSAY: 6.400281
[illegible]: 6.374297

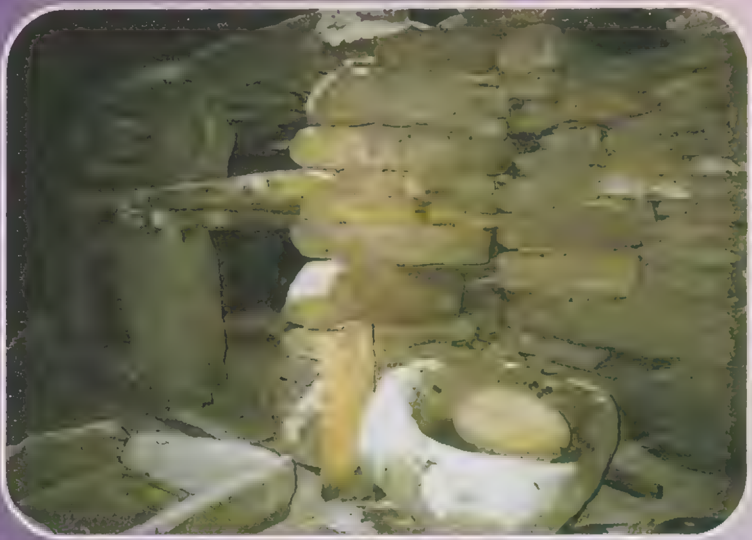
KNOWE OF YARSO: 6.405279
MIDHOWE: 6.371304
TAVERSOE TUICK: 6.426276

7 c) 7

ORDNANCE SURVEY
6.229187

Skara Brae

On the north-west coast of the Orkney Mainland, the magnificent crescent known as the Bay of Skaill curves around its beach, all strewn with a tidal mark of great waterworn flagstones, like a great cairn road. In 1850, a great storm pounded the Bay of Skaill and sent its currents reeling against each other until it revealed the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, or Skeroo Brae. The site was investigated by William Watt, the laird of Skaill, who dug four houses out and filled his large home, Skaill House, full of Neolithic treasures. Thereafter, the village was left generally undisturbed until 1925. But that December saw the worst storms since 1850, and the whole of the front of Skara Brae was suddenly exposed, to such an extent that damage was done to the previously excavated area of the village. The Office of Works entrusted the shoring up to V. Gordon Childe, an archaeologist who was to completely restore Skara Brae and uncover the whole village. Luckily for future investigators, the ancient Orcadians had had to go to great and permanent lengths even when making a temporary thing like furniture. Whilst timber tables and dressers were suitable for the mainland of Britain, on Orkney even driftwood was carefully laid out to dry. Bone tools were discovered in the village along with pendants also made of bone and claw, bored to accommodate a string. Quernstones, a carved knobbly geometric ball, a carved ceremonial stone axe and containers of ochre were also found, along with bizarre carved finds, like ritual geometric 'rugby' balls and ritual 'trepanners'. This megalithic furniture, like that of the Knap of Howar,^{G} was far more useful because of the easy-cutting qualities of the flagstone. Though it was not built with the intention of lasting thousands of years, it has done so easily and shown that the Ancients had the same hopes and dreams as we do, the same simple needs for storage, the same fads for temporary satisfactions. V. Gordon Childe's excavations showed that the village had been evacuated quickly in the manner of Pompeii's demise. A string of beads was discovered scattered in a hallway, never to be recovered. Neolithic stone tools were found still in their places in cubby holes. Decorated grooveware pots lay smashed on the floor and broken bone pins were left scattered about. But it is thought that the Bay of Skaill may have been a freshwater lagoon in the Neolithic, so it is difficult to imagine even a tidal wave exerting much force, if the inhabitants had been protected by the safety of the bay. The seven houses are all in good condition, except in house three where the storm of 1925 washed away the dresser and several tanks. William Watt reconstructed the seaward-side wall of house one in the 19th century, but added a convenient window to it.



Two old women, probably great elders of the tribe, were buried before the foundations were dug at Skara Brae, in a dedicatory rite to the Goddess. It is possible that the custodians of the Stenness complex^G lived here at Skara Brae, for its proximity and its road seem providential.

[illegible]

MORE NOTES FROM SKARA BRAE, ORKNEY MAINLAND: MID-AFTERNOON, 16TH JULY 1992 CE

I'm sitting at an angle facing the bay but looking across house eight. For a sense of place Knap of Howar is a must – if not, four hours on Skara Brae beach will do. Other tourists don't put me off Skara Brae … it is a different kind of monument, a national monument. Down on the beach, my stone circle is destroyed. The avenue is gone and the cairn is gunkey and sad. I loved to photograph it today. My muscles are crazy, pumped up after the other day, and this morning it was a problem getting out of bed… In the Neolithic, the ocean bay was a freshwater bay separated from the sea by a spine of low land… Unlike the stone circles, which lose power from visitors, Skara Brae seems to positively relish them.

Go to the crossing of the A965 and B9055, between Stromness and Finstown. Skara Brae is signposted to the left, along with Stenness and Brogar.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
7.470845

7 c) 9

Tomb of the Eagles

Down on the far cliffs of South Ronaldsay, the Tomb of the Eagles nestles into the shore with almost the same timelessness as before the chambers were opened. Because of the special circumstances at the Tomb of the Eagles, an inordinate amount of finds has been discovered and kept safe, so that radiocarbon dating has dated the monument to 3150 BCE. The site was not even discovered until the present owner of the Liddle land on which it stands, Ronald Simison, was out looking for quarry material for strainers, or corner-posts, on his newly aquired farm at neighbouring Isbister. It was one day in summer 1958 that he visited the eastern cliffs and was about to go away empty-handed, when he noticed a small patch of walling under his feet on the cliff. Simison intuitively cleared away the vegetation to reveal a hole. He put in his hand, his wrist, and then his arm, for providence had sent him to the very spot where lay a polished black-and-white stone Neolithic macehead, a smooth orange stone knife, a polished jet button with perfect circular shape and two holes, and one black and two green highly polished axe heads. Simison took the artefacts home to his wife Morgan, and the news spread around the area. The next day, Ronald Simison and his brother-in-law dug into the mound and it became clear that this was a large chambered cairn. Unfortunately, no-one considered the cairn of enough importance to act upon, so Ronald Simison took it into his own hands to excavate it. It was a wildly presumptuous thing to do, but once started, opened up such a can of worms that the archaeological community had to act immediately. The chambered cairn revealed itself to be a mighty structure. Four chambers led off one long chamber with stalls along its length. Huge amounts of pottery, skulls and human remains were found, along with the skeletons of at least ten white-tailed sea-eagles, huge birds with a wingspan of up to seven feet. Like the Fairy Knowe's[G] dog cult, these chambers were built by people of a prehistoric eagle cult. There is a freshness to visiting Ronald and Morgan Simison's farm which transcends any museum. The finds are right there in the conservatory, and the visitor feels sure that these artefacts will not, unlike those in the storerooms of the British Museum, be left to gather dust on shelves where they may be knocked off and become unprovenanced and worthless. These artefacts are cherished, and filled with the mana of the personal relationship of the excavator. This is not a plea for excavation – I hate it. But it is a salute to a one-off archaeological situation which was resolved with dignity and had a happy ending.

Liddle Burnt Mound.
A few years before his major excavation, Ronald Simison (far left) gained his first experience on the official dig at Liddle, close to the Tomb of the Eagles. Burnt mounds confounded experts for years, but they were [illegible] an ancient cooking process in which the stones were heated up and thrown into water to boil it. Then meat and vegetables were [illegible]

EVENING NOTES AT THE TOMB OF THE EAGLES, SOUTH RONALDSAY: 16TH AUGUST 1993 CE

This is an astounding place. A perfect place. Below me in the bliss blue seas, seals play on rocks and seagulls glide... To my left, cows are horny and threatening to throw each other over the edge of the cliff. To my right a hill path has taken us the mile walk up the gentle wide open views of Isbister farm from the museum where Ronald Simson now displays his finds from this place. And at all times on this clifftop, the flagstone rises out of the ground as though shooting to the sky. Sharp as the angle of Silbury,[G] the flagstone shoots clear to the sky. It's a view sent from heaven, a clear blue day and we've been here for hours. Over 100 skulls were found in this beautiful place. It is huge, extremely well-fashioned and, like all the Orkney cairns, a stone classic. Visit the Tomb of the Eagles – it's a complete killer!

Take the A961 off the Orkney Mainland and down through the Isle of Burray to the southernmost tip of South Ronaldsay. Take the left turn on the B9041, continue for approx. one mile to Cleat. At the village, signpost right for Liddle and Isbister, or the Tomb of the Eagles.

The Great Sacred

Clustered around the southern shores of the Loch of Harray, on the Orkney Mainland, are three of the largest Neolithic monuments in Britain, which, combined with other lesser monuments, once created a landscape temple which stretched in a great arc three miles long. Though a great deal has been destroyed in the past 250 years, there is still quite enough left to glimpse this area's former glory. It is thought that the water levels in Orkney would have been considerably lower in the Neolithic, so the isthmus of land that separates Loch of Harray from Loch of Stenness would have been larger and far less dramatic than it is now. Beginning at the easternmost point of the complex, and therefore following the line of the sun and the moon, the first of the Stenness sites is the legendary Maeshowe, an enormous Neolithic round mound and the largest chambered cairn in Scotland.

Maeshowe

The great round mound of Maeshowe stands like an enormous green felt sombrero on the flat lowlands of Mainland Orkney. Like Stonehenge[G] over 1,000 years later, Maeshowe was the standard of its time. Outside, the dramatic round summit rising to over twenty feet is underlined by the subtle boundary ditches. Inside, the sophistication shown in the laying of the flat stackable Orcadian flagstone was quite at odds with the building aims of those elsewhere in the megalithic world, suggesting that the Orcadians had got to grips with a superlative medium in which to work and were driven by its possibilities. Though no mortar was used, in places within Maeshowe's chambers, the cyclopean walling will not even allow a knife blade to pass between. A thirty-six feet crawl down the passage to the chamber allows time for the traveller to goggle at the size of these stones. In a recess on the left is an enormous shaped blocking stone, which perfectly fitted the entrance passage. Finally, the chamber opens out to a massive room fifteen feet square with a high ceiling. On the other three walls at about chest height, plugged chambers are situated with openings around two feet square. The remarkably shaped blocking stones sit on the floor beneath their chambers, like miniature versions of the giant at the Dwarfie Stane.[G]

The name Maeshowe is Viking, and it is disappointing but inevitable that so much of Maeshowe's legend centres upon this period. But 12th-century Viking robbers left graffiti which states, 'It is long ago that a great treasure was hidden here' and 'Hakon single-handed bore treasure from this howe' and literature of the time suggests that the mound may have been entered many times. Maeshowe was described in the 12th-century *Orkneyinga Saga*, in which there was a war between two earls, Harald and Erlend. Harald and his followers took refuge in Maeshowe one night, but the dreadful experience caused some of the party to go violently mad, slowing their progress to a crawl. Other graffiti on the walls includes Viking carvings of a dragon, a walrus and a serpent knot, also a story which describes a party of crusaders who met at Maeshowe on their way to the Holy Land. Maeshowe then fell into legend for over half a millennium, during which time the 12th-century hollow in the roof grew over and became forgotten knowledge. It was not until 1861 that James Farrer was lowered into that same hole by his friends George Petrie and the antiquary J. Stuart and their workmen, and Maeshowe rolled back into history. Farrer's methods of excavation have been called into question all over the Orkneys, but his work at Maeshowe has

Monuments of Stenness

not been slighted. This may, however, be because he covered his tracks, rebuilding what he destroyed, refashioning what he did not understand, and writing about none of it. It was left to George Petrie to provide a sensible note of the excavations of 1861, but we must be thankful that Maeshowe is too substantial a structure for even James Farrer to have vandalised.

The Ring of Brogar

On the Ness of Brogar (also spelled Brodgar) amidst springy heather and shaggy long grasses, the Ring of Brogar stands upon higher ground than its sibling at Stenness. Here, the ground is raised and the great ring is surrounded by large cairns. Its deep rock-cut henge is patterned with the same heathers and grasses, but the bank is barely visible. The lichened stones stand in family groups, with lonely outliers here and there surrounded only by half-buried fallen flagstone. One stump bears the carving of a Viking called Biorn, whilst others bear carvings of runes, an anvil and one Ogham carving. The diameter of the attractive earthwork ring is about 120 paces, but the circle's sixty stones have been reduced to today's twenty-nine grand menhirs. The positions of thirteen other stones are still known, leaving twenty unaccounted for, but probably destroyed. The stones are an average of seven feet tall, but the tallest is a magnificent fifteen feet tall and stands guarding the west quadrant. Another large stone, over twelve feet tall, guards the south station. Like Stenness, most of the stones have the familiar Stanley-knife blade tops, though some are flat across. It has been suggested that Brogar inspired the building of Avebury[G] – certainly its form is wildly inspiring and very similar.

The Standing Stones of Stenness

The ruined ring of Stenness, standing in the flat lands at the edge of the low Loch of Stenness, is an unfathomably rich and enigmatic monument. For in its ruin Stenness is huge and awe-inspiring to such a degree that to have glimpsed it whole would have been near mind-boggling. To the near north-west, the stones of Brogar bristle up on their ridged earthwork, whilst the great mound of Maeshowe rises three-quarters of a mile to the east. At Stenness, a great ditch over six feet deep and twenty feet wide was dug by quarrying into the solid sandstone. The spoil was then used to throw up a bank on the outside. This enormous job quarried over 1,200 tons of stone, implying that the ditch here was every bit as important to the builders as the stones themselves. This is in stark contrast to the Mayburgh[G] henge, whose builders dug no ditch at all,

preferring to collect boulders from the river for the construction of their bank. It has been suggested that the standing stones were all quarried from the henge ditch, but this seems unlikely. Recent suggestions lean towards the quarry having been close to the Ring of Bookan. On Christmas day, 1814, Captain W. McKay, the tenant farmer of Stenness, attempted to destroy the remaining Stenness stones, furious that tourists were ruining his crops. By the time a suspension order had been granted against his acting in this way, the farmer had destroyed the Stone of Odin, one of the greatest stones in Scotland, full of legend and visited by lovers who had made their vows through its fashioned hole since history began. A bungalow, the lone trace of settlement on this small peninsula, now stands incongruously upon the Stone of Odin's site. The Stones of Stenness were first accurately surveyed in 1848 by Captain F. W. L. Thomas of the ship HMS *Woodlark*. A bogus dolmen stood in the middle of the circle until 1972, whereupon it was vandalised and thrown down. This event caused the site to be excavated in 1973 by Graham Ritchie, who resculptured the ditches and redefined the banks. When Ritchie was unable to find the lost postholes of the circle, he asked the surveyor and archaeologist G. Ron Curtis, who calculated the likely positions for the ring as an ellipse – the post-holes were discovered immediately. The circle of high stones had been erected in a small thirty-pace diameter, giving the impression of a towering inwards-leaning sky-temple. These stones are megalithic playing-cards, for the remaining stones are all giants of between sixteen and almost nineteen feet tall, yet the tallest is only ten feet thick. Perhaps it was really Stenness, with its small henge and towering cluster of megalithic sabres, which influenced the building of Stonehenge.

NOTES WITH MY BOOK UP TO MY NOSE IN FULL MOONLIGHT FROM THE RING OF BROGAR, STENNESS, ORKNEY: 11.50 P.M., 14TH JULY 1992 CE

A full moon over the stones tonight. And a clear and cloudless sky. Here I lie in the ditch in the west quarter, the larger stone of the ring looming up to my right, the moon right in front of me. It's warm tonight and I'm wrapped up well – I feel there's no point in under-dressing to get closer to the earth. Ancient Man was in a quite different state; he never even considered warmth, he just knew he would never get very warm, so his whole awareness changed. It lifted him. Cold, pain, endurance of anything lifts the soul out of the body. Tonight at Brodgar, the whole area is still except for two friendly photographers both aching to capture this moment. And Brodgar is a real trip, its stones (twenty-nine of the original sixty) stand in bundles, some single and alone, in one part of the six or seven at once, yet each stone is quite individual and all are special. Alistair Service has written a novel about the Avebury builders taking their inspiration from Brodgar. It is such a glorious inspiration, the stones cut off like Stanley-knife blades at the tip, Stenness-like but without the extraordinary art-statement quality of that monument. Brodgar looks more functional – the stones are all good, but do not have the total perfection of Stenness. Today, I built a small stone circle on the beach at Skara Brae.^{G} For four hours, I dragged the largest, most jagged Orcadian flagstone down on the beach and soon had a circle and avenue, with a central leaning stone like Boskawen-Un.^{G} I'd been dreaming of playing with that flagstone for months, its qualities make these monuments surpass almost every other place. Brodgar is so fine. The light here now is incredible, I can see with my face even seven inches away from my book and the full moon is passing across the stones. The large monument is such a righteous earth temple, quite how perfect they are is difficult to explain until you visit. Now the moon is affecting me. The cloud above makes the whole sky vibrate and I am delighted. This is a mighty place – nighttime is an extra-special time, this is a glorious place. Goodnight, midnight!

[illegible]

TOP LEFT: This huge mound is surrounded by myths and is the proud owner of the finest megalithic masonry yet uncountered. It will be noticed that the fine interlocking qualities of the Orcadian flagstone produced the best-made Neolithic monuments of all, prompting Jacquetta Hawkes to write: 'When a building material such as easily shaped flagstone was available, the New Stone Age builders of about 2500 BC were able and willing to achieve formality and symmetry.' From Maeshowe, the Neolithic traveller would have perambulated west around the loch, between the shore and the Neolithic complex at Barnhouse. The Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brogar both stand close to the tiny bungalow, which can be seen in the distance, just above the far left edge of the Maeshowe earthwork. Also note the huge black massif of land in the distance. This is the Isle of Hoy, the only Orcadian island which stands proud of its surrounding waters, and visible from great distances.

LEFT: The Standing Stones of Stenness also share the magnificent view down to the Isle of Hoy.

All of these monuments are visible and signposted on the A965 between Stromness and Finstown.

MAESHOWE: 6.318127
RING OF BRODGAR: 6.294134
STENNESS: 6.307125
RING OF BOOKAN: 6.284145
THE WATCHSTONE: 6.306126
STONE OF ODIN (SITE): 6.307127
BARNHOUSE STONE: 6.313122

7 c) 10

ORDNANCE SURVEY
6.283117

Unstan

The large circular stalled cairn of Unstan stands on a low-lying promontory out into the Loch of Stenness. This curiously restored green mound looks out to the Ring of Brogar and the Stones of Stenness^{G} just a mile and a half north-east across the loch, its high waters always threatening to lap around the cairn's rim. Unstan is a famous place, for it was here that the Neolithic pottery known as Unstan Ware first appeared in 1884. Pot after pot was reclaimed from the chambers by the Orkney antiquary R. S. Clouston until thirty-five had been found. Until this time, according to Audrey Henshall, Unstan had been just 'a grass-grown mound with a depression in the centre'. The cairn remained in good shape until Callander's infamous excavation of 1929. This antiquary/cowboy left the cairn is such a mess that by 1934 the Office of Works was forced to put a concrete dome over the cairn and turf it into the bogus structure still seen today. Visitors to the Rousay Monuments^{G} will encounter more of Callander's exploits along with his cohort Mr Grant. The interior of this stalled cairn is a long main chamber of inspiringly close-fitting drystone walling separated by slim megalithic partitions, which really do no more than define the boundaries. A separate chamber is built off the centre stall. This is reached by a low creep about two feet high. Runes and a carving of a bird were discovered across the outer edge of the lintel at the cell's entry. Today, the floors of the chamber are covered with gravel, but when Clouston excavated in 1884, he wrote: 'A rude floor is made by a flagstone ... and supported on blocks of stone.' Bones were scattered throughout the chamber and stalls, across floors of clay, with a covering of 'black ashy or earthy matter', as Clouston recorded. Bones of many animals, including dogs, birds, pigs, oxen and sheep, were found. Like the human bones, they were barely examined. A flint knife, three flint arrowheads, scrapers and various other tools were also discovered.

AT LAST, NOTES AT UNSTAN, ORKNEY: 20TH AUGUST 1993 CE

Will Unstan be one day taken by the waters? For 5,000 years now she has sat on this dogged peninsula, itself hardly bigger than the space needed to hold a fair size Orcadian temple. Once, the waters were considerably lower and, like Quoyness,^{G} Midhowe^{G} and Holm of Papa Westray,^{G} Unstan overlooked the waters, rather than as now, where they lap lap around her. I've been to Unstan many times and never written notes until now. She's too much of a hang-out, a place to be. Unlike the Fairy Knowe^{G} or Wideford Hill,^{G} she is not an obvious spiritual centre. The hole in her roof makes the light just that bit too much for a real temple. Not even the Sputnik Cathedral or the mad one at Coventry are quite so light as this. But Unstan is a special tomb, a place where a type of Neolithic pottery was found and then given its name. Standing at the entrance, it's easy to see Stennes,^{G} Brodgar^{G} and Maeshowe^{G} from Unstan. The Bronze Age mounds stand out particularly and Bookan crouches intriguingly at the left of the scene. Today I brought reproduction Unstan Ware to photograph and long stones from the beach in front of Quoyness. A couple of tapes made by archaeologists have me thinking. I reckon archaeosonics could teach us a lot. Here goes…

Unstan is signposted on the A965 out of Stromness.

Wideford Hill

A long walk through high grasses takes the traveller to the chambered cairn of Wideford Hill, overlooking the broad fertile views of Wide Firth. This is as sweet a scene as is found on the Orkney Mainland, and it is from Wideford Hill that this extra-low-lying landscape seems at its most steamlined and magical. Without a tree covering or uprisings of rock, the Orkney landscape here looks like an endless recumbent female in a green baize bodysuit, steeping in an endless and motionless blue swimming-pool. The chambered cairn has lost its mound, but it is a large attractive monument in its denuded state and has taken on a pyramidal grandness which was clearly never intended by the builders. The Wideford Hill cairn was built on pre-levelled ground on a steep hillside, which gives the cairn a superb sense of permanence – though the millennia have seen some inevitable slippages of stones. In 1849, George Petrie excavated its conical turf-covered mound, which was mainly made of clay. Within, he found bones of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and deer. He also discovered that there were three drystone 'skins' enclosing the chamber and passageway. The tiny entrance was at the front, and all of the floors of the passages and chambers were level. Inside, there is very fine masonry, similar to that at the nearby Fairy Knowe.[G] When the cairn came to the end of its period of ritual use, it was shut up with stones forever – a special chimney had been created in advance. It was through this that the chambers were eventually filled by dropping debris in from above.

NOTES FROM THE CHAMBERS AT WIDEFORD HILL, ORKNEY MAINLAND: MID-MORNING, 14TH JULY 1992 CE

Above me is brilliant sunshine, the roof opening to this temple sending shivers through me and bolts of exhaustion all around me. The cairn is a long walk from the road and this morning I chose to walk from our cottage in Kirkwall. The effect is quite startling – the chamber is wet and drips fall around me but what a sanctuary this is. An iron gate let me into the chamber, the original entrance being meshed over. Now, the low entrances of the three chambers branch out from me on three sides and I sit, my back to the wall and write... *Continued in torchlight from the deepest chamber:* My tiredness is a thick woven blanket today. I am exhausted and emphatic. Inside this deep tomb is a very special peace. This is a perfect meditational place, gloriously inward and every view, every move made by the builders was a masterpiece. Like Cuween, set up on the high slopes overlooking the sea, the tomb is a plug in the hillside, a female temple conforming righteously to the gentle definitions of its environment. Phallic building seems adolescent, gawky and awkward compared to this place. I wish I had more time, but I spent most of the morning getting here. It's a difficult place to photograph, but a glorious place to be.

Wideford Hill requires an O.S. map.

Clava Cairns

The Nairn river, flowing north-east parallel with the Moray Firth, encounters a pair of wildly conflicting emotions about twelve miles from the sea. For on the north shore is Culloden Muir, or moor, the scene of the evil Duke of Cumberland's massacre of the Highlanders in 1746 CE, and, just as symbolically, the end of the ancient clan system. But on the south shore is a line of three Neolithic cairns delightful to behold and of tremendous prehistoric importance. These are the Clava Cairns, standing in their tree-ringed antiquarian grove, all remarkable beauties and all of formidable construction. There are many of these types of monuments thoughout the area of Inverness, the Black Isle, the Spey Valley and the legendary head of Loch Ness.

The axis of the site centres around the huge north-eastern passage grave, which is surrounded by a battered stone circle in the style of a mini-Newgrange. The twelve-stone ring has suffered casualties, but eleven of the graded stones still survive in some shape or form. One is a remarkable eight-foot slab whilst others are barely noticeable. The material of the cairn is formidably high, over ten feet tall, and has lost its capstone, revealing a gaping circular chamber. The whole cairn is encircled by large kerbstones to keep the monument in place, but the weight of this cairn material has caused some of them to be pushed outward. One of the kerbstones at the north is massively cup-marked. The passageway into the chamber is aligned on the mid-winter sunset, which would have entered the twenty feet long passageway between the distant horizon at the bottom and the lintel at the top. Excavations at the north-east site took place in 1854, though it is unknown what degree of reconstruction was used here. The central cairn in the line is a large ring-cairn of the same substance as that at Loanhead of Daviot.[G] It is a flat oval over 100 feet in diameter, with huge kerbstones and three very substantial turfed cairn-causeways at the west-north-west, the south-east and the east. Their former use is unknown, but their excavator Stuart Piggott likened them to the spokes of a wheel. At the end of the line stands another large passage-grave, less grand and complete than the northern site, but still formidable. The Clava Cairns have been excavated many times – in 1828–9, when excavators discovered pottery and bones from the southern cairn; in 1854, when excavators found bones in the north-east cairn chamber, along with thick layers of black earth laid across the red sand; in 1876, when six stones of the stone circles were re-erected; in 1881, when the central ring-cairn was restored; and finally, in 1953, when excavation discovered a shallow grave over which had been placed a layer of white quartz pebbles.

MAIN PHOTO: The main site at Balnuaran of Clava.
INSET: Doogie Scott in the main chamber at Clava.

NOTES FROM CLAVA CAIRNS, NEAR INVERNESS: 5TH JULY 1992 CE

Slung within a copse, low and neat and beautiful, the three cairns are like a perfect picnic area for the heads. Today, we are with Doogie Scott, a remarkable astro-archaeologist who uses Alexander Thom's theodolite, given to him many years ago by Thom's son, Archie. This place is an extreme complex; a chambered cairn, a ring-cairn and another chambered cairn, all encircled by rings of stones. Doogie thinks the centre ring-cairn was a burning pit for bonfires. The outer cairns house only a single burial. The complex is set in a shallow valley bottom and there are other ruined monuments; cairns, etc., around. In today's beautiful peace, there is no noise except the low hum of visitors' conversation. The cairns are as beautiful, though minus their capstones and restored in places. The stone circles are made up of large granite blocks, some large, some small and none erected only to impress. The circles range right across the road at one place and it is remarkable that these monuments remain. These five hours have been so peaceful. So very peaceful.

At Daviot on the A9, take the right turn at the B851 and travel north. The Clava Cairns are beside the river Nairn, and are signposted. In most road atlases. The other sites require O.S. numbers.

DAVIOT:	27.727412
DRUIDTEMPLE:	26.685420
KINCHYLE OF DORES:	26.622389
MAINS OF GASK:	26.679358
TORDARROCH:	26.681335

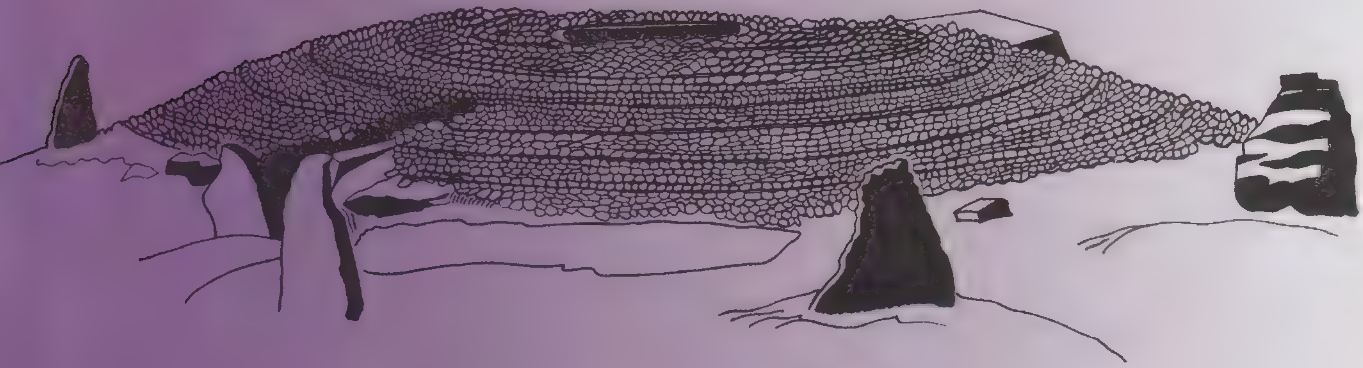
7 d) 2

ORDNANCE SURVEY
26.383303

Corrimony

The great Clava Cairn of Corrimony stands in peace and quiet on the gentle northern riverbank of the Enrick, exactly nine miles west of Loch Ness, into whose dark waters the river disgorges its contents at Drumnadrochit. Corrimony is a fine restored example of a typical large Clava Cairn, and should be visited in order to grasp the builders' intentions, since most of these cairns' precincts are often too dilapidated to understand. The monument sits in sheep pasture, a large cairn of water-washed pebbles housing a large central chamber, the whole being surrounded by a circle of standing stones. The cairn in the centre was extremely well-constructed, and the large kerbstones which supported the outer cairn were carefully graded in order to prevent slurry and movement within the construction. The central chamber was reached by a long, low passage which still retains enough of its roof lintels to give the modern imagination a glimpse of the rituals of antiquity. The passage and chamber both had cobbled floors, which were then ritually prepared with great scatterings of quartz. The circular chamber is nowadays open to the sky and the capstone now lies neglected at the side of the roofless chamber. It is a large eight foot by five foot affair with many cup-marks on its top. The walls of the chambers would have originally been corbelled, starting out level then rising closer and closer together until the roof could have been closed with a single large capstone.

Stuart Piggott excavated the site in 1952, at which time it was discovered that four of the eleven standing stones in the circle were replacements. When the ditch was dug between the site and the road, intruding stones were moved inwards towards the cairn, whilst another stone, which looks as though it has wafered into three pieces through erosion, was actually re-erected in this bizarre manner some time before 1874. Also, two circle stones were set up south of the entrance in 1882. But this was actually a piece of antiquarian fancy, for these were not circle stones at all, having originated as capstones in the roof of the long chamber. Piggott's excavation also revealed a crouched burial, though this was discovered only in outline, having been removed with the general debris during the swift 'excavations' of the late 19th century.



NOTES FROM CORRIMONY CHAMBERED CAIRN, NEAR LOCH NESS, HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND: 1.40 P.M., 6TH JULY 1992 CE

The peace of this place is remarkable. I'm sitting on the low wooden bridge that leads to this encircled chambered cairn, cows mooing, sheep baaing, and the brilliance of this cloudy day burning my eyes. Corrimony is a real showcase … a classic place… The animals here are crazy and stare at everybody… [Corrimony] lies in pastureland low and ultra-green surrounded … by low hills of pine trees. The stones of the cairn are all water-washed smooth and taken from the river nearby. These encircled cairns are charming and magical – a place to stay many hours.

Drive along the A831 from Cannich towards Drumnadrochit. After about five miles, turn right at 'Glen Urquhart/Corrimony' sign. The cairn is signposted from here. In most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
11.260440

7 d) 3

Grey Cairns of Camster

The magnificent Grey Cairns of Camster are the closest to Martian monuments in the whole of Britain, but it is their situation and presentation which give this effect rather than the cairns themselves. These two chambered cairns sit on damp springy open moorland, their brilliant mid-grey stones only approached across slatted wooden boardwalks which prevent travellers from sinking into the mire. These two monuments were once three great round chambered cairns, but recent excavations proved that the two northernmost cairns had later had a long cairn superimposed upon them to give the impression of one enormous monument. Huge horns were added to the ground plan of the long cairn at some time and its restoration was only completed in the early 1980s.

The chamber of the round cairn was discovered around 1851 by the antiquaries Rhind and Stuart. The passageway and chamber remained intact during this period, but the fall of lintels rendered the passageway impassable. Unfortunately, these 19th-century excavations also destroyed all the burials, but they did manage to retrieve flint tools, burnt bone and destroyed pottery, along with an 'iron knife blade'. It is likely that the original roofs of the cairns collapsed when the Victorian work took place, so the most recent excavators have added roof-lights and fibre-glass domes to the weak points in the roof. Both structures have very long passageways, the round cairn's being a slow twenty foot crawl on the knees.

FREAKED OUT NOTES FROM THE GREY CAIRNS OF CAMSTER, CAITHNESS: LATE AFTERNOON, 10TH JULY 1992 CE

This is a world site … I feel all the energy in the world. Here, I feel a man of peace … only Callanish[G] has struck me so. This is a moment. Yet now my first moment. I came here this morning with the cloud hanging low and the summer horizon was laboured and unblessed, changing all the time, but not now. Now, the peace in these hills strikes me far inside and I believe that there … is definitely something going on here. I am mystified and intrigued in a totally unscared way. Sitting high on the ledge in this restored tomb, I know this place was made by people of high magic. I have had moments here today which tell me of something different. These great stone monuments so move me, even more than earthen longbarrows, which I'm also a sucker for. But this tomb is extremely hard to contemplate. Here, I lose track of time and of sense. This monument alone makes sense and that's a fact.

Drive north on the A9 from Lybster and take the left turn signposted 'Grey Cairns of Camster'. In most road atlases.

7 d) 4

ORDNANCE SURVEY
11.295384

Hill O'Many Stanes

On the rugged Caithness coast behind the scattered hamlet of Mid Clyth, there is a gentle sparkling eminence known locally as the Hill O'Many Stanes. Over 200 low stones cover this hill in twenty-two apparently parallel rows, a megalithic phenonenon unique to Caithness. But on surveying the Hill O'Many Stanes, it was discovered that there were originally over 600 stones actually set out as a gigantic megalithic fan. It was in the 19th century that Sir Henry Dryden noticed the stones' rapid disappearance at the hands of road-menders and drystone wallers – and it was Dryden's work which first alerted people to this local megalithic mystery. The smallness of the stones may have contributed to the indifference of locals, and their small size is certainly a factor which has allowed so many other megalithic fans to have gone missing in the gorsey fastness of Caithness. Fans still exist behind the Cairn of Get, at the Grey Cairns of Camster,[G] at Loch of Yarrows, and many others, some only discovered when heath fires inadvertently burned off all the scrub. But all are so dilapidated that the Hill O'Many Stanes is the only easily visitable example. Alexander Thom surveyed around a quarter of these Caithness sites and declared them to be lunar observatories. The smallness of the stones had allowed a certain amount of 'solifluction', or movement in the ground through the actions of ice and differential thawing over millennia, and this has caused less accurate surveys. But even without perfect surveys, the positioning of these stone fans enabled Professor Thom to state unequivocally: 'The site is most certainly a lunar observatory. The chance is extremely remote that these stones are situated by accident...'

The first antiquary to notice the Hill O'Many Stanes was the Reverend Charles Cordiner in 1780, who called them 'a very singular collection, all well-shaped thick flagstones, standing erect...' In 1886, the endless long rows evoked in Joseph Anderson a feeling 'of small grey slabs, like the headstones of a country churchyard'.

NOTES FROM THE HILL O'MANY STANES, MID CLYTH, CAITHNESS: 10.30 A.M., 11TH JULY 1992 CE

Sssssssssssh! The wind sweeps over the dry grass. The phasing of the cars on the A9 down the hill. The mist over the sea. The horizon mute and blending with sea and sky as one. The glare of the hidden sun simmering, its cauldron of lava imprisoned behind this earth aura called the atmosphere. Sssssssssh! Here I sit at the Hill O'Many Stanes. Two hundred and fifty stones, none more than thirty inches tall, some recumbent, some taken away, but row upon fanning row splaying out across this hill. Alexander Thom described it as a megalithic astronomical device. The stones are not parallels, but nearly parallels... The coastal view is infinite and the Caithness coast especially inspiring with its many cairns, spoiled brochs and fallen stones. Looking uphill, the stones weave up to the horizon and it's here that the astronomers have a field day... This Bronze Age megalithic conductor is beyond being built for size in order to impress...

Drive north on the A9 from Lybster towards Ulbster. The Hill O'Many Stanes is signposted left, north of the modern settlement of Mid Clyth. In most road atlases.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
11.188417

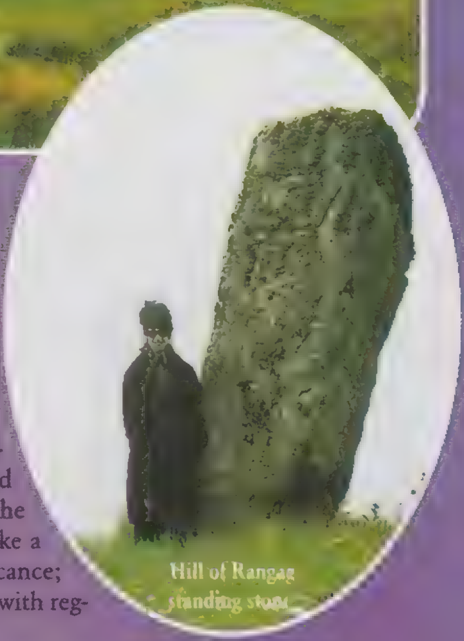
7 d) 5

The Great U of Stemster

In the lea of Stemster hill, with distant views to the south-west, the Great U of Stemster is a remarkable monument, almost unique in prehistoric Britain. The stones stand beside the small Loch Stemster, with the ruined remains of a chambered Neolithic round cairn just around thirty yards to their south. This long setting of thirty-six large slab stones is most unusual because the stones have been set up 'side on', not with their backs but with their edges on the circumference of the U-shape. Many have been removed and there would have originally been fifty-four uprights, but each of these remaining weathered stones is particularly substantial – their heights and widths average around four feet, whilst the tallest example is around six feet. The Great U is the only surviving example of such a bizarre and large stone formation, though there was once a similar example at Broubster at 11.047608. Another example was also known to exist at Latheronwheel, but it was broken up for the building of drystone walling at the end of the 19th century. Their position on the exposed Caithness eastern side has allowed the stones to weather into wafers in places, a little like the effects caused in the Orkneys. In the north-east corner, other slabs have been set up which may have been kist burials, but they are from a later period than the main semi-ring. The slab stones of the monument clearly affected their builders – the one protruding through the chaos of the Neolithic cairn looks just the same as those used in the Great U.

NOTES FROM THE U OF STEMSTER, ACHAVANICH, CAITHNESS: 6TH JULY 1992 CE

Sitting up on the mound of the ruined cairn at the U, it seems … the open side of this intentionally unfinished ring is the exploded stopper of a fizzing powder keg. What a barren place this is, the moor raw and badly treated with fences and wires and pylons, but the stones so near to the waters of Loch Stemster. The placing of the U included the levelling of the ground and partial embanking of the eastern end of the setting. None of the stones are tall, the largest around six feet, and though thirty-six of the original survive, this place is magical unlike any other I have seen. All around us are sheep on this windblown moor and the rushing of clouds above us changes the atmosphere of this place every minute we are here. Dorian thinks this place looks like a huge astronomical horseshoe magnet. Certainly the stones' setting is of some significance; each one is set end on rather than side on, removing this place from any brotherhood with regular stone circles.



Hill of Rangag standing stone

NOTES FROM THE GREAT STONE OF RANGAG, CAITHNESS: 10TH JULY 1992 CE

This stone, nine feet tall and two feet nine inches square at all sides, is situated high up looking down across the hills … and is a beautiful Bronze Age stone. It's not a hang or even much of a visit (we had to go through a farmyard past large dogs) but must be visited, if only for the incredible views all around.

Drive south on the A895 from Mybster towards Latheron. At Achavanich take the only left turn and continue briefly until you pass Loch Stemster on the left. The Great U is beside the road, immediately after the loch. In some road atlases.

The Shetland Isles

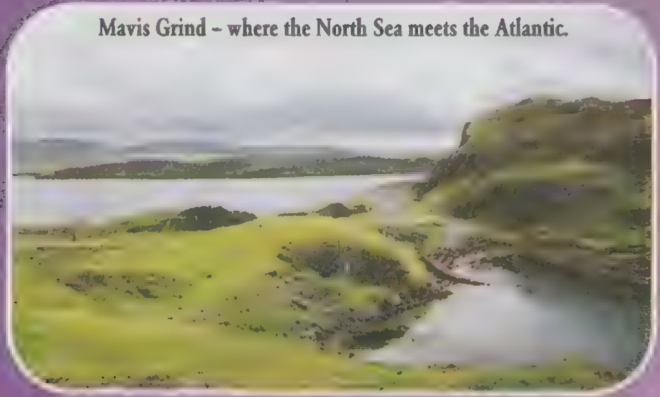
Neolithic evidence is not thick on the ground in the Shetlands, and it would be unwise to base a whole trip on this period. Journeys to the Iron Age/Bronze Age Clickhimmin and Jarlshof are also important, though there seemed no reason to include them here. This is a mystical journey through a deep unchanging valley of barren beauty.

At Clivocast, on Unst, only one of the great stones remains impressive.

1 Mavis Grind

This narrow neck of land, just 100 yards across, separates the North Sea from the Atlantic. The colossal watery grind of Mavis Grind will one day mean her total destruction and the creation of a new northern island. The story has always fascinated Shetlanders and excavation has found Neolithic settlement upon Virdins Hill, a hill of Ver on the north-west cliff overlooking Mavis Grind. Walls and foundations were discovered for other buildings, but Mavis Grind was found to be a palimpsest – this means that it had always had such significance that generations upon generations of settlers have always been at Mavis Grind, making it difficult to see the Neolithic evidence in the face of all the later overlay. But many finds were discovered – saddle querns made of granite, potlids of micaceous sandstone, whetstones and small polishers made of softer rocks, grinders, pestles, hammerstones and pounders, all made of tougher igneous and metamorphic rocks. *The Orkneyinga Saga*, written in about 1200 CE, reveals more obsessions with Mavis Grind. The saga tells of how King Malcolm of Scotland finally bowed to the constant pressure from King Magnus Barelegs of Norway by allowing him to lay claim to all the islands west of the Scottish mainland. The definition of an island was classed as land around which a boat could pass. King Magnus laid claim to all of the north-western part of Shetland Mainland by sitting at the helm of a boat while his followers dragged it up the steep banks of Mavis Grind from the Atlantic side at the west to the eastern side of the North Sea, thereby representing the land as an island, and thereafter its being known as North Maven. It is thought that Mavis Grind in the Neolithic period could have been almost a half mile wide. O.S. 3.340685

Mavis Grind – where the North Sea meets the Atlantic.



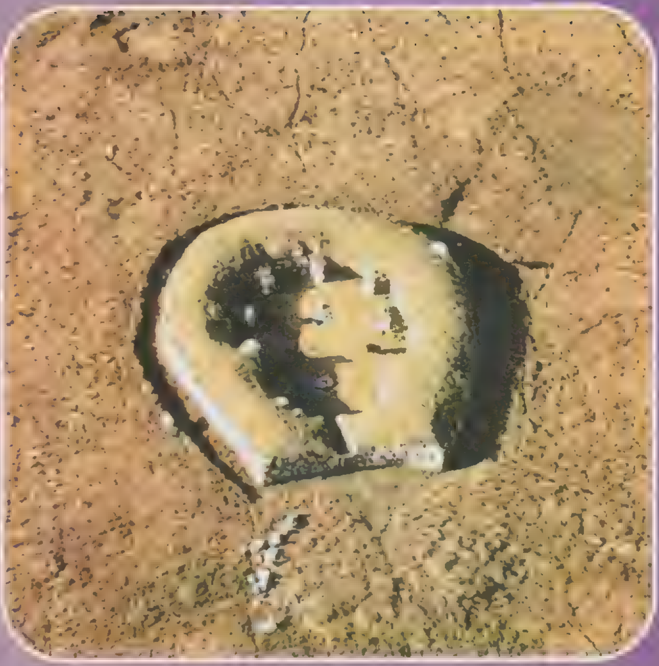
2 Clivocast

Moving three miles to the south-east, from its high eminence in pasture, the shaped pillar of Clivocast overlooks the waters of Skuda Sound. Its dark stone is weathered and hoary, and the presence of a herd of Shetland ponies gives the illusion of a far larger standing stone. O.S. 1.606007

The Shetlands require an O.S. map.

3 Stanydale Temple

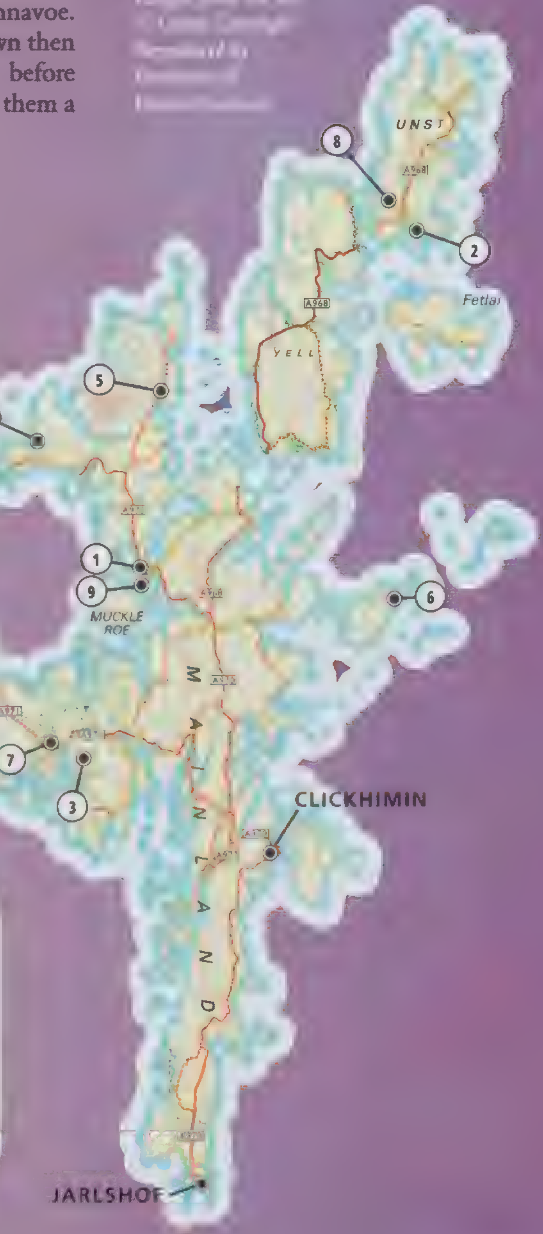
This temple is the only one of its kind in Britain and the only monument on the Shetlands which suggests larger gatherings. Two deep wide post-holes in the centre of the foundations suggest a substantial timber-and-thatch roofed building, but there was also a stone circle around the temple, so it is possible that it was open to the skies. Pottery and stone tools were discovered here, but unlike evidence of household rubbish on the floors of Neolithic settlements, here the floor was kept spotless and no finds of that kind were made. There is no central hearth, which is a mystery, if this is a centre of ritual. As the authors Noel Fojut and Denys Pringle wrote, in their *Ancient Monuments of Shetland*: 'Stanydale remains remarkable in a landscape characterised by an abundance of ordinary structures.' Fojut and Pringle ask one extremely important question about the Stanydale Temple: '…was this structure deliberately built in one of the very few places in Shetland from which the sea is invisible?' O.S. 3.284503



4 The Giant's Stones of Hamnavoe

This former three-stone alignment stands upon Grind Hill in the very north of the remote Shetland Mainland, with a powerful view over the Villans of Hamnavoe. The alignment was vandalised in 1774, and one of the stones was thrown down then later removed. The remaining stones are six and eight feet tall. Sometime before 1978, they were surveyed by Alexander Thom and his son Archie, who called them a lunar observatory. O.S. 3.243806

The Giants of Hamnavoe.



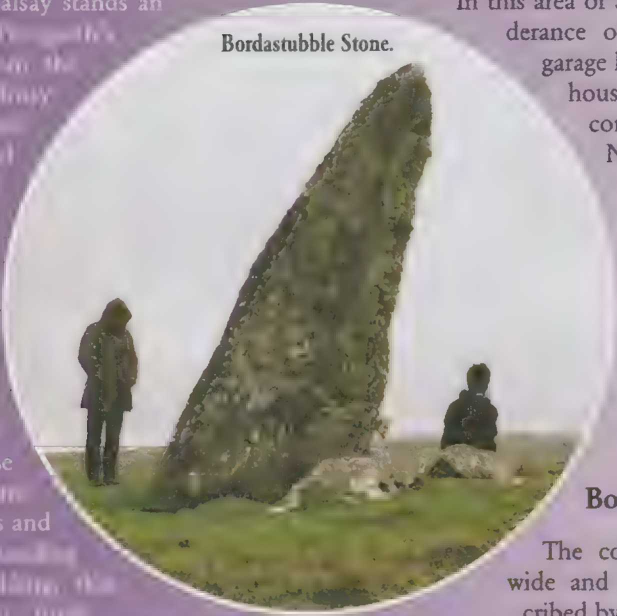
5 The Beorgs of Housetter

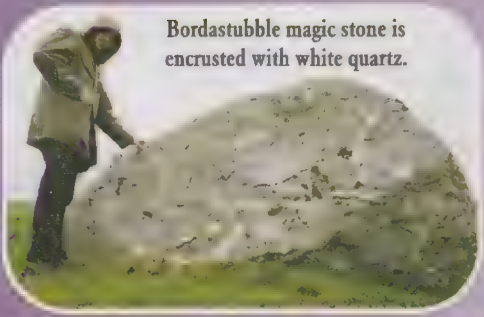
On the high east coast of the Shetland Mainland stand two destroyed chambered cairns and two large standing stones. They are situated along the narrow A970, sandwiched between the tiny Loch of Housetter and the sheer cliffs known as the Beorgs of Housetter. The two stones are aligned north–south, and they stand six-and-a-half feet and almost nine feet tall. Between the two stones stands the Giant's Grave, one of the very destroyed cairns constructed of white granite. About ninety paces to the north is the other, known as the Fairy Mound. O.S. 1.362855, 2.362855 and 3.362855

The Beorgs of Housetter.

6 Pettigarth's Field

On the far easterly island of Whalsay stands an [illegible] are unimaginable. The Benie Hoose [illegible] tions of stone, along with recesses and [illegible] cultural centre overlooking the north, [illegible] exerted extreme power. Was this a site [illegible]


Bordastubble Stone.


Bordastubble magic stone is encrusted with white quartz.

Scord of Brouster

In this area of Shetland, there is such a preponderance of Neolithic activity that a tin garage has been built over one Neolithic house in the past thirty years, without complaints. Scord of Brouster is a Neolithic settlement situated on a large ledge with views which are, apparently, magnificent. I saw this site in thick fog. Three houses and enclosures lie all over the hillside, along with large field cairns and megalithic walls. Scord of Brouster was excavated by Alistair Whittle in the 1970s. O.S. 3.257516

Bordastubble Stones

The colossal Bordastubble stone is a wide and leaning pear-shaped giant, described by Aubrey Burl, in his *From Carnac to Callanish*, as 'looming like a chilled watchman on the bare slopes overlooking the sea'. Legend has it that it was thrown to its current postion by the Devil, who stood at the Rounds of Tivla, the mist shrouded sacred hill to the north. But this is a huge stone. Though it stands only twelve feet tall, it is over seven feet wide and weighs thirty tons. About forty paces to the south is a magical natural stone, made of granite and encased in an ice sheet of thick white quartz. O.S. 1.579034

The Busta Stone

Legend has it that the Devil threw the Busta Stone to its present position, less than a mile south of Mavis Grind and overlooking the peaceful waters of Busta Voe. Because of its high unassailable position, the Busta Stone is a local sailing mark. Though only ten-and-a-half feet tall, the stone weighs twenty tons and has an almighty bulk – hauling it so far up this hillside is an inspiring feat. O.S. 3.348675

NOTES FROM BORDASTUBBLE, UNST, SHETLANDS: 5TH AUGUST 1993 CE

Bordastubble is a huge granite block twelve-and-a-half feet high and seven feet across on a moor on the most northerly inhabited island in the whole British Isles. Bordastubble leans into its base where a confusion of packing stones creates a hollow trough and pushes skyward like a gigantic megalithic handshake making for the sky. High to the north-east, a huge Mother mountain enshrouded in low curtains of cloud is the home of the ruined Rounds of Tivla, highest of the burial cairns in this land and looking to the north and desolation from the unsafety of this civilisation's most unsecured footing. Bordastubble is an extraordinary example of man's tenuous grip on the landscape. To the south-east, a magic stone encrusted with quartz is playing tricks with my compass as this Sooth Moother [a derogatory term for a southern non-Shetlander] tries to take in this vivid and desolate beauty.

ORDNANCE SURVEY
23.298440

7 d) 7

Vatten

The two large unexcavated Cairns of Vatten stand on the dramatic western ridge of Glen Heysdal, overlooking the river Caroy's meeting with Loch Caroy. It is thought that they were set up upon specially levelled ground, on which a platform was then constructed with a deep peristalith kerb of boulders all around the edge of the cairn to prevent slippage. Nicholas Thomas has noted that the completeness of the cairns has revealed no indication of any chambers or passages. This is because the Vatten monuments have been remarkably free of depredations over the years due to their isolated position. Despite a little cairn slippage, the cairns still retain their high ridge-backs and lie in tandem, parallel with each other. To the west, the grand table mountains of Healabhal Mhor and Healabhal Bheag rise majestically against the skyline. Also known as the Macleod's Tables, these two natural features appear to have influenced the positioning of the Vatten cairns. These cairns are rich in legend, and one story tells of how the great chief who owned this land went on a raiding mission, returning with slaves, gold and cattle. But on his return, the ships sailed slowly into the bay, for the chief himself was dead. Legend says that his body was placed in the southernmost cairn, whilst his galley was ritually set alight and sent out into the middle of Loch Bracadale. It is also said that the cairns of Vatten were the results of a huge battle between the rival tribes of the MacLeods and the MacDonalds. They decided to have a final contest but a thick fog descended upon the warriors, which caused so much carnage that next morning everyone lay dead. Only the old men and women of the clans remained, and they were forced to perform the bloody task of making two separate piles of bodies, over which the two cairns were then piled.

From the unexcavated cairns of Vatten, the great MacLeod's Tables rise dramatically on the Skye horizon.

NOTES FROM THE CAIRNS OF VATTEN, SKYE: MID-AFTERNOON, 8TH JULY 1992 CE

Sitting high in the seat at the south cairn, this solitary place is a site of the gods. Green is peaceful all around me and the sheep, scattered around the near distant miles, bleating w/ occasional worried lamb. Way over to the west are the volcano-like mountains of MacLeod's Table North & South. Skye is a place of double-horizons, magical and intriguing. High up here on Vatten, ark-like and lonely, I'm again at the very top of the world... The cairns instead propel me to all points of the horizon. Vatten is slung low on the hillside but allows the visitor every view of this skyline. And again, the sun comes sweeping across the moors, pushed and prodded by the billowing cloud.

Drive south on the A863 from Dunvegan. After about three miles, turn right towards Vatten and Harlosh – Vatten is the first modern settlement. The two cairns stand proud on the skyline.

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Because of the sheer volume of different books passing through this eight-year project, this bibliography is, of necessity, highly selective and reflects only books which have been of specific local importance or which contribute in some way to a further reading list. All dictionaries, maps, bibles or others such general guides have also been excluded for lack of space.

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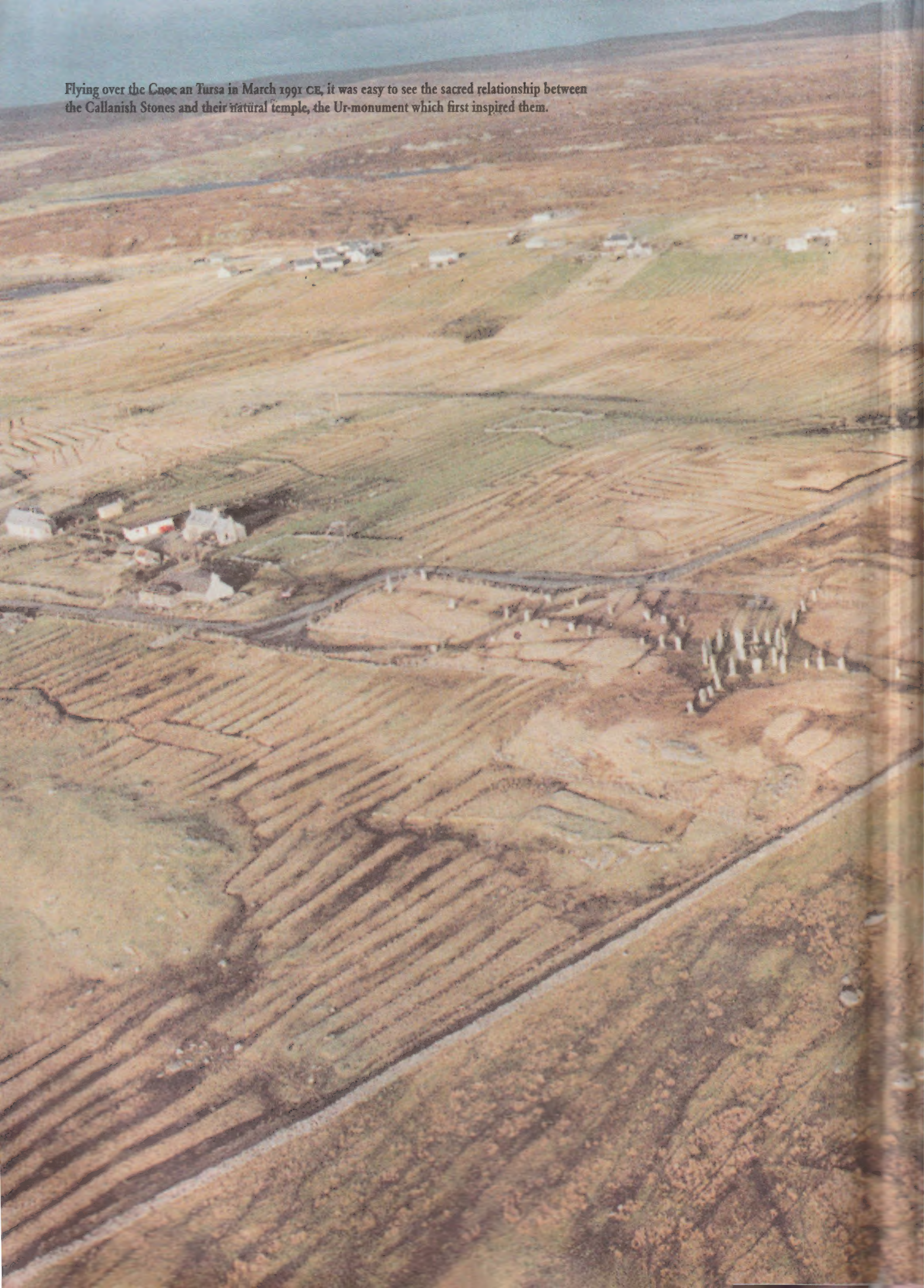

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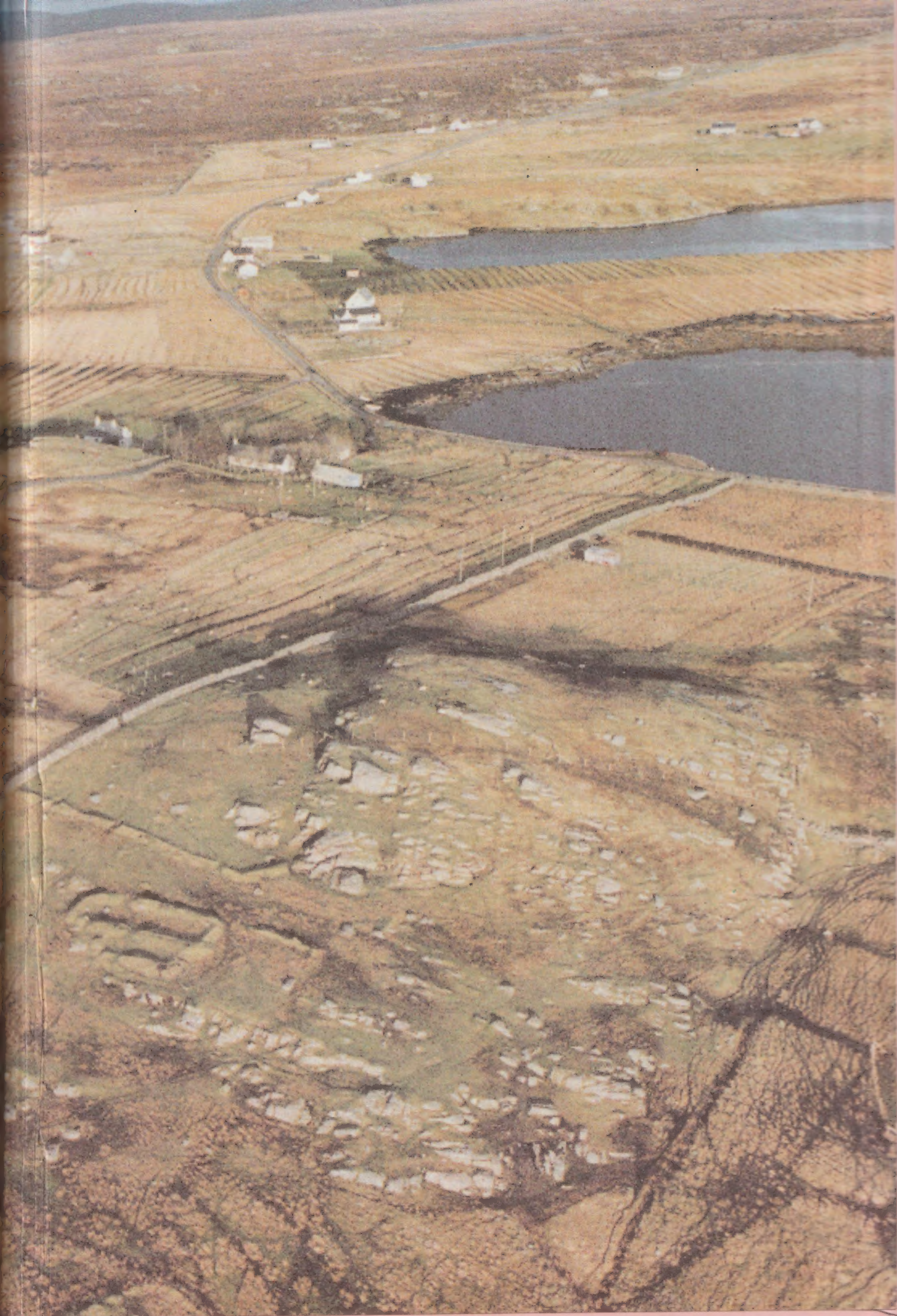

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